

THINKING TOWARD CHRISTIAN UNITY

BY
JOHN B. COWDEN

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TEXTUAL THEME

"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers
in the prophets by divers portions and in divers
manners, hath at the end of these days spoken
unto us in His Son, . . . who was faithful as a son
over His house, whose house we are."— HEBREWS.

DEDICATED

TO MY
FRIEND AND BROTHER,
DR. PETER AINSLIE,
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY APOSTLE
OF
CHRISTIAN UNITY
IN APPRECIATION OF HIS ZEAL AND WORK
FOR THE UNITY OF ALL CHRISTIANS

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CHAPTER I

OUTLINE



CHRISTIANITY is threefold in content and character,—emotional, ethical and intellectual, —and therefore appeals to man's whole being. If Christian unity is to be truly Christian, it must be and do the same. It must make the highest emotional, ethical and intellectual appeal, and must be approached from these three viewpoints. On account of the difficulties that lie in the intellectual realm, this approach to Christian unity is usually ignored or avoided, and only emotional and ethical unity is sought; but such a unity is only partial. If unity is to be really and truly Christian, Christians must be brought not only to *feel together* and to *live together* but also to *think together*; and, unless they can be brought into some intellectual accord on things religious, unity is a vain hope. As Bishop Brent has said, "If we are to move toward real unity, we must stop ignoring the big essential doctrines, which were ignored in the Edinburgh Missionary Convention." This convention made the emotional approach to unity; the Universal Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm made the ethical approach; and the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne, which has now been concluded and reported to the churches, made the intellectual approach, and is open for review by the Christian world. The very fact that such an approach to unity has been

made without further schism, which many have held could not be, augurs much for Christian unity. The Conference at Lausanne was an effort to bring Christians to think together; and, while intellectual agreement was not accomplished, real progress was made toward this end; and it is the purpose of this book to help further the same.

The intellectual approach to Christian unity is entirely consistent with the nature and genius of Christianity. Christianity is truth as well as emotion and life. Christ had as much to say about truth, as he did feeling and life; and his truth, which, like all truth, is intellectually perceived, must be put in the foundation for Christian unity. In making the intellectual approach to Christian unity the author wishes to avoid making the impression of over-emphasizing the intellectual or of ignoring the emotional and ethical sides of unity. The Conference at Lausanne built upon the conferences at Edinburgh and Stockholm, to which frequent references were made; and likewise this book builds upon the same and in line with the Conference at Lausanne, so a brief statement about this Conference is herein given as the background of this book.

There were about seventy-five denominations represented in this Conference,—in fact, all the large bodies except two; and the delegates were representative of the best thought and life in these churches. Many years had been spent in preparation for this Conference; and it was well organized from the beginning to do the work for which it was called, so it can be said that it was a true test and estimate of unity to-day. While it is too early to form any true estimate of its abiding value and effective results,—this remains for the church historian of the future,—it is well for all to-day to think over and weigh

well what was said and done in this Conference that it may carry furthest toward ultimate unity. The author of this book was a member of this Conference, studying closely men and issues and looking diligently for the way of unity for the churches there represented; however, it is not the purpose of this book to make a report of the Conference, which can be found in the published minutes of the meetings, or to give estimates and impressions of the same, but rather to discuss further the issues and problems of the Conference together with other subjects which are involved in the solution of the problem of Christian unity. There was little discussion in the Conference, but much statement of positions, looking for common ground for unity; and, where common ground could not be found, there were frank statements of differences made, and referred to the churches, hoping for better understanding and the final removal of the same. The findings of the Conference have been passed on to the churches and individuals for their consideration and action, so discussions, looking toward the removal of these barriers to unity, are now in order, which is proposed in this book.

In discussing these barriers to unity it is purposed and hoped that the spirit of this book shall be the spirit of the Conference, which was truly Christian in all respects and under all conditions. There was a frank, honest facing of many of the intellectual problems and difficulties in Christian unity without offense to anyone, and a sincere effort on the part of all to think together toward unity as far as possible; and, where this seemed impossible, to state fully and frankly the differences and difficulties. There was no dodging or compromising of issues, but a sincere effort to see all issues in the white light of truth and brotherhood;

and, while feeling and interest were often at white heat, no offenses were given or taken. The spirit of Christ prevailed in all meetings, which many feared could not be, and which is indeed a great contribution to the cause of unity. That men can differ widely, and still manifest the spirit of Christ in all their differences, gives hope of final unity, because the spirit of Christ will eventually bring together all those who manifest his spirit, and follow his leading. In line with this Conference this book seeks to pass on to all Christians the spirit and problems of the Conference and to discover in the light, experience and study of the same any new light that may help further toward Christian unity. The Conference was called and conducted in answer to Isaiah's invitation, "Come now, let us reason together," over the problem of Christian unity, and this book seeks to pass on to the reader this invitation and effort to think together toward unity.

While Christianity is first of all an emotion, love for God and man, and is a life of such great ethical verities as joy, peace, mercy, faith, hope, love, justice, righteousness, beauty, etc., all of which must be given a large place in anything Christian and especially Christian unity, yet it is also truth, and has done more than all other religions to elevate the race intellectually. The truth of Christianity must, therefore, be kept in mind in planning for Christian unity; and any unity that does not make the highest intellectual appeal cannot be Christian, and must fail, because men will not go where their intelligence does not lead; but to find the intellectual road that leads to Christian unity is the difficult problem. The Conference at Lausanne sought for this way, and we continue the quest in this book.

The position of this book is, that intellectual unity can be had only upon the broad fundamentals of Christianity, upon the fewest fundamental principles that will preserve the integrity of Christianity; that is, upon the broadest intellectual basis possible, and the fewer the principles the broader and stronger the foundation becomes, and vice versa. So then, the quest for intellectual unity is through a process of *exclusion* more than *inclusion*. The policy of trying to include in the foundation for Christian unity the distinctive tenets of every sect and denomination has been exclusive and divisive rather than inclusive and unifying. The basis for Christian unity must be broad enough to include all Christians,—all disciples for whose unity Christ prayed,—and must contain every principle that is essential to Christianity. Beyond the few essentials of Christianity there must be the broadest liberty that will preserve these essentials. *The minimum of authority with the maximum of liberty must, therefore, be found as the basis for Christian unity.* The purpose or proposition of this book is to discover and set forth this ultimate of Christianity as the only practicable basis for intellectual unity.

We do not mean, however, that all except this irreducible minimum of Christianity must be set aside. This would result in a barren religion “without form and void.” While Christianity is a religion of few essentials, which constitute the foundation and framework of the Christian religion, it also has numerous forms, ceremonies, creeds, doctrines, governments, etc., which are necessary to the symmetry, beauty and functioning of the same. While they are the mere filling or husks of Christianity, they have their place, but not in the foundation for Christian unity. In such matters there must always be sufficient

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diversity to meet the individual taste, temperament, conviction and culture of all Christians; but unity founded upon uniformity in such details is a vain hope. While, as Paul teaches, there must be a "unity of the Spirit," there must also be a "diversity of gifts, ministrations, workings," etc.; and this diversity is just as essential to Christian unity as "the unity of the Spirit." It must be a unity in diversity which was the conviction of the Lausanne Conference. Accordingly, this book seeks to discover and set forth the few spiritual verities, which are essential to Christianity, and to bring all to think together about these, leaving everything else in the realm of Christian liberty. The right of the individual and group to worship God according to the dictates of conscience was purchased at too great a price to be surrendered for Christian unity or anything else; but at the same time there are some essential truths in Christianity which must be held in common by all, if we are to have Christian unity.

To find a basis for unity that allows diversity and liberty, and yet preserves unity, is a difficult and, some think, an impossible undertaking. There are such widely separated extremes in the church to-day that it seems like a hopeless undertaking to bring them together on any common ground for unity. On the one hand, some are so broad intellectually that they are religiously flat without faith in anything above themselves; while, on the other hand, others are so narrow and short-sighted in their faith and practice that they cannot see beyond their own little sectarian world in which they live. The former need to be convinced of the great essential verities of Christianity; while the latter need to do as the English statesman exhorted his colleagues, "Gentlemen, you must study larger maps." The map or

vision for Christian unity must include every essential principle of Christianity and every disciple for whose unity Christ prayed. Anything short of the universal church of Christ is sectarian, and is not the unity for which Jesus prayed. We must, therefore, think, plan and work for the unity of the whole church.

There are not only extreme groups in the church, but there are extreme individuals. In fact, there is more or less of the extreme in every individual, which brings the problem of unity home to all. The pertinent question is, therefore, a personal one; namely, "Am I too extreme to unite with the followers of Christ? What are the difficulties and barriers, the middle walls of partition between me and other Christians, and can they be broken down, or do I want them broken down?" Through faith and obedience the walls of Jericho were broken down; and Christ broke down the middle walls of partition between Jews and Gentiles, which many in that day said could not be done; and he can do the same for the divided church to-day, if all will follow his leadership as expressed in the essentials of Christianity.

However, on account of the many extreme groups and radical individuals in the church and the many perplexing difficulties and great barriers in the way of unity, many question the possibility of any real intellectual unity. The desire for Christian unity is practically unanimous to-day; all look upon it as "a consummation devoutly to be wished"; but many do not think it possible. It is certain that *only* those that greatly *desire* to unite can unite. There must be a great and impelling desire for unity to surmount the great difficulties in the way; but there must be more than the desire for unity. "If wishes were horses, beggars

would ride," is as true of Christian unity as anything else. A practical way to unity must be found, which many think impossible.

But notwithstanding the many difficulties and barriers to unity, which are great and formidable, Christian unity is not an impossible task. Christ prayed for Christian unity, and said that it shall be,—“There shall be one flock and one shepherd.” Furthermore, Christian unity actually existed in the early church for four hundred years; and what has been can be again. Furthermore, Paul declared, “I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me”; and Christians to-day can do the same, provided they have the same faith and impelling motive which was in Paul. There is a challenge in the seeming impossibility of Christian unity for every courageous and loyal follower of Christ. So, at the risk and daring of undertaking the impossible, all Christians need to respond to this adventure of faith and obedience. Besides, there is the Christian tie of a common love, which Paul says binds Christians together in spite of all the alienating causes, and wins the victory over all barriers and opposition. (Rom. 9:31-39.) Christians have a common love in Christ that can and will unite all that truly love the Lord. A flaming passion for Christ can melt and unite the hearts of all in a lasting bond of Christian brotherhood.

But as powerful as love is, love cannot do it all. Intelligence must lead the way. There must be some common intellectual ground upon which all Christians can stand. Good will and love are essentials of unity, but they are not the only essentials, as some seem to think. There are some barriers to unity that a mere outpouring

of kind feelings cannot sweep away. These are largely intellectual, and must be thought through to common ground. Men will never go where their minds do not lead. There must, therefore, be some broad intellectual basis for Christian unity as well as a great impelling emotion. Such a foundation for unity will be sought in the few essential truths of Christianity, and this book seeks to discover and to bring all to think together upon these; but, when this is said, the problem is not solved, but only stated. It is no easy task to determine what are the essentials of Christianity, and it is a harder task to bring all to think together upon the same; but we can at least think together toward Christian unity along these lines. As we proceed, we will be agreeably surprised at the agreements among Christians, which was the surprise of the Lausanne Conference. While there were great differences, there were greater agreements, which were found to be more far-reaching than any had hoped. As Dr. Charles E. Jefferson says in one of his books, "There is a remarkable agreement among all Christians on things fundamental."

The quest for the essential truths of Christianity is greatly facilitated by the fact that Christ, the great teacher and founder of Christianity, gave fundamental principles rather than specific laws. "The law came by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"; that is, the fundamentals of religion were given by Jesus. In giving these fundamentals, he did not claim nor practice originality in all cases. As he expressed it, he brought forth out of the storehouse of the past his treasures both old and new. He selected, condensed and brought to fulfillment the truth of the past, and added to this his own revelation.

Essential religious truth in Christ's day had been greatly obscured, and almost entirely buried beneath the rubbish of Jewish traditions and the doctrines and commandments of men. He stripped truth of all these human additions and traditions, and condensed it to an essential minimum. (See Matt. 5-7, 15, 23.) Accordingly, his recorded teaching is very brief; yet it is comprehensive of all essential religious truth of the past, and includes all that is true in the present. No religious teacher since has been able to add a single religious principle of any value and importance. Christ was able to compress into a single sentence the experience and wisdom of the human race; and his teaching constitutes the essential residuum of the world's religious truth, which he gave as the foundation for a world religion, in which he intended to include in peace and unity all races and classes of people.

Furthermore, Paul and other spokesmen for Christ have aided much in their statements and expositions of these essentials. Some have charged Paul with being a theologian and obscuring the religion of Christ with his theology. It is true that Paul was an expositor and elaborator of Christian truth, but his themes were the fundamentals of Christ's teaching. Even at this early period in the history of Christianity, when many of the people were familiar with the teaching of Christ himself, there was a need of reëmphasizing the teaching of Christ, which was in danger of being obscured and lost sight of. It was Paul who contended for Christ's truth against all departures. In his letters to Timothy he warns him against all departures, which he characterizes as "words to no profit," "profane babblings," "profane and old wives' fables," "questionings and disputes of words," "endless genealogies," "science so

called," etc., which were obscuring and displacing the truth of the Gospel of Christ; and he charged Timothy to "preach the inspired word," and to "guard" what he calls the ultimate "deposit" of Christianity, which was being confused and engrossed with human traditions and philosophies. Timothy's problem of knowing and distinguishing this ultimate "deposit" of Christianity from the mass of human teaching with which it was being mixed and confused is still with us, only in a more difficult form. The truth of Christ has been buried beneath volumes of church doctrine, philosophy and science, and has thereby been greatly obscured and largely lost sight of. The chief problem of Christian unity to-day is, therefore, to rediscover this ultimate "deposit" of Christianity and to call all the followers of Christ out of the theological and philosophic maze of to-day into unity upon this fundamental minimum of Christianity. In doing this it is not necessary to declare against any of the religious and philosophic systems of to-day, which doubtless contain much that is true; but none of these systems of truth can be made the basis of Christian unity. They may have their place in human thought and life, but no place in the foundation and program for Christian unity.

This ultimate "deposit" of Christianity, which had been committed to Timothy, seems to have been well known to the Apostolic church, yet there was no formal statement of the same made by the inspired writers of that age. Christians of later ages met in ecumenical conferences, and endeavored to formulate and authorize credal and doctrinal statements of this ultimate "deposit" of Christianity as the basis and the standard of conformity for Christian unity; but all such credal and doctrinal state-

ments have been outgrown and amended and in many cases rejected by succeeding ages as inadequate for Christian unity. In the Lausanne Conference there was strong opposition to the authority of the traditional creeds and doctrines. While many accepted them as more or less useful and valuable, only a few were willing to accept them as the basis of unity. In fact, every credal and doctrinal statement which has been satisfactory to one age and church has proved to be unsatisfactory to another, so we cannot hope for unity in the future on any such written statements and authoritative formularies. If the inspired writers of the New Testament did not see fit to give such a statement of the essentials of Christianity, it is foolish for others to undertake to do so.

While the New Testament contains no formal credal statement of the essentials of Christianity,—nothing that could be called “mental categories,”—yet the fundamental principles are plain to all who read and study the book. The New Testament contains the historical and doctrinal statements of those who “were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word”; and they “declare that which we have seen and heard.” Also these inspired records of the beginnings of Christianity contain much of what Christ himself taught and did; so anyone that reads and studies these records will be reasonably sure of what the essentials of Christianity are. Furthermore, every now and then these inspired writers of the New Testament give a summarized statement of that which was authoritatively delivered unto them, and they sometimes state on their own authority what they know Christianity to be; however, no one of these writers attempts to give any fixed formal statement of these fundamentals; yet they

clearly reveal by informal and collective statements the essentials of Christianity. It would be interesting and profitable to study all such New Testament statements in their bearing upon the problem of unity; but this book will be confined to the study of one from the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews as follows: "*God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, . . . who was faithful as a Son over His house. Now we are this house of God.*"

The above text was not written as a comprehensive formulary, nor can it be used as such,—it is merely a part of the introduction to the Hebrew Letter, which was written to show the superiority of Christ and his religious system over all others; yet it contains all the essentials of Christianity. It is one of the mountain-peak texts of the Bible, from which we can view Christianity in its entirety and in its vast reaches and unfathomed depths. We are so engaged and troubled with the little things of Christianity that we are apt to lose sight of the big things of the same, and are apt to conclude therefrom that Christianity is a little religion, concerned for the most part with the "mint, anise and cummin" of denominationalism, and made up of wrangling, warring sects. This is what one must conclude from what he sees in the low valleys and narrow horizons of the little sectarian and denominational worlds, in which most of us live. The early Christians, and especially the writers of the New Testament, lived in the broad open spaces of a universal religion, which was taught them by Jesus Christ; and the only thing that can save us from our sectarian littleness and narrowness is a vision of Christianity in its entirety

from one of these mountain-peak texts, written by one who had been on the mountain tops of truth with Jesus, and had there caught a vision of what Christianity really is. Naturally, those who live in narrow valleys with small horizons limited by the near-by hills and mountains conclude that this is a little world in which we live. In fact, no one can fully realize how big this world is until he sees it from some mountain top like Pikes Peak. After winding up a spiral road for twenty miles to an elevation of 14,000 feet and finally standing on the top, you look to the east, to the west, to the north and to the south as far as the eye can reach, and gaze into the dizzy depths of the valleys below, you then begin to realize how big this world is. Just so let us climb to the top of this great text; from the Hebrew Letter and from the spiritual elevation of the same let us behold Christianity in its vast reaches and unfathomed depths. Let us look in the five directions or realms of religious truth indicated in the text, and we will be thereby convinced that Christianity is intellectually big enough and broad enough to hold all those who seek God and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

The first direction or word of the text is "God,"—a little word but the biggest concept in the thinking and language of men. With the eyes of the soul gaze into the incomprehensible infinity of God. Next, "has spoken,"—the word of God. Try to comprehend next the unfathomed depths and vast reaches of His Word. Then "unto the fathers and us,"—the human race, man. See man in all his capacities and needs. Next, "His Son," Jesus the Christ. See him in all his strength, beauty and glory. And last, "the house of God,"—the body of Christ, the Church. Behold this church of God, planned before the

foundation of the world and coming down through the ages and preparing herself as a bride for the coming of the bridegroom,—the Son, who has been faithful. Thus from the summit of this text see God, His Word, man, His Son, His church, and try to comprehend the vast reaches, the unfathomed depths and great mysteries of these five great religious concepts or facts, which constitute Christianity; and you will be thereby convinced of the intellectual greatness of Christianity.

John, in his introduction to his Gospel, gives the same five essentials; namely, "God," "the Word," "the only begotten Son," "every man," and "the children of God," which is the church; and he states that these essential verities have been from the beginning. Men have often been ignorant of, and sometimes rejected, these great truths of religion, and thereby missed "the life and light" from the same, but they have never been able to change, destroy or add to these essential truths of religion. When "the word became flesh, and dwelt among men,—full of grace and truth," it was to further and better reveal these essential truths of religion; namely, God, His Word, His Son, man, and His children, the church. These constitute the foundation of the Christian religion, and must enter, therefore, into the thinking and faith of all that profess and call themselves Christian.

The same fundamentals are given by Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians, 4:4-6, which is a more elaborate and interpretative statement. Instead of "God," he says, "one God and Father of all"; for "His Word" he writes "one Spirit," who is the revealer and teacher of God's Word; instead of "His Son" he puts "One Lord"; for "man" he writes "all," and gives an analytic statement of man's

nature, highest interest, duty and destiny,—“one hope of your calling, one faith and one baptism”; and instead of “the church” he says “one body.” While no writer of the New Testament attempts any formal or categorical statement of the essentials of Christianity, they knew and expressed the same; and there were no essential differences between them, but, as seen in the above, a remarkable agreement even in their statements.

The above essentials constitute the sum total of Christianity. Are they not sufficient and adequate for a universal religion,—big enough and broad enough and deep enough and high enough to hold all that seek God through His Son, Jesus Christ? The purpose of this book shall be to show that in these five great essentials of Christianity we have an adequate and satisfactory basis for intellectual unity.

Each one of these essentials covers a realm of truth, which is inexhaustible, and can only be touched in the briefest and most general way in this book; however, the briefer and more general the exposition of these essentials is made, the better it will be for the cause of unity. Christian unity has been greatly retarded by the many systems of theology and church doctrine, which have been deducted from the above fundamentals; and the author of this book wishes to avoid further hindering the cause of unity by any elaborate interpretation and exposition of the same. The purpose of the book is more to make these essentials known and accepted as the intellectual basis of unity than to interpret the same.

As already stated, these essentials as contained and expressed in this text are not formal or credal; and the author of this book disclaims any intention of making

them into a creed or formulary of any kind. Only a study and application of these fundamentals to the problem of Christian unity is purposed. There are wide differences in the interpretation and elaboration of these verities, which some try to avoid by fixed creeds and formularies; but they may be accepted without such conformity, which leaves the interpretation and elaboration of these principles to the individual, and thereby affords a broader basis for unity. While this book contends for these essentials as the foundation for unity, the broadest liberty in the interpretation and elaboration of the same is granted.

But it is claimed that the above verities are broad generalities, which all accept in one form or another, and do not, therefore, touch the real problem of unity. Differences between Christians are not over these essentials, but over the interpretation and elaboration of these principles. This is true; but these differences do not alter the fact that these principles are the fundamentals of Christianity, and constitute the intellectual foundation for Christian unity, which fact needs to be emphasized and impressed. Our differences have been so emphasized that we have lost sight of these great truths, which all accept. Whether or not we may agree on the interpretation and elaboration of these truths, they are, nevertheless, the essentials of Christianity, and need to be known and recognized as such. Christians can never stand together until they know well upon what they stand. The purpose of this book is to emphasize these fundamental truths, which all accept, and plead for unity upon the same. Our differences over interpretations and elaborations and other minor matters, when they are dwelt upon to the exclusion of these great truths, lead to the conclusion that

we have nothing in common, whereas we have much in common; in fact, all the above great essentials that lie at the foundation of Christianity. The keeping in mind of these great verities, which all accept, will greatly aid in removing differences over the interpretation and elaboration of the same and all other minor differences.

While the broadest liberty in the interpretation and elaboration of these principles must be granted, at the same time these truths must be preserved from destructive interpretation. A principle or fact may be interpreted out of existence; so the above facts must be guarded against such interpretation. But, in trying thus to preserve by exposition and elaboration these truths, the author of this book is deeply conscious of the narrow borderland between essential principle and private opinion. Just here lies the crux of the unity problem. So, in case the author, in the judgment of the reader, passes in his interpretation and elaboration of the above essentials into the realm of opinion, let it be received as such; but let all hold to these fundamentals, which constitute the foundation for Christian unity.

However, this book does not propose to ignore differences, because this would be quitting the problem of unity just where it begins. These differences will be freely and frankly treated; but they will be treated in the light of the above truths, which all accept. There are wide differences between Christians, which all must recognize, and endeavor to remove by agreement or otherwise before Christian unity can come. Shutting our eyes to differences does not remove them, or bring those differing closer together. The way to unity leads *through* and not *around* our differences.

Let it also be noted that the inspired author of the above text, containing these five fundamentals,—God, His Word, His Son, man and His church, makes no effort to prove them. He interprets and elaborates some of them, but does not attempt any apologetic for the same. In fact, these truths cannot be proved any more than the fundamental truths of mathematics. They are the axiomatic principles that underlie the Christian religion, which are seen to be true but cannot be demonstrated. While the above essentials of Christianity are self-evident facts, which do not permit of demonstration, they are nevertheless facts that can be known and experienced. A religion that cannot be made real by experience is a false religion. Furthermore, these fundamentals are facts and not doctrines. Doctrines are deductions from these facts, so, for this reason, we may never have complete doctrinal unity, and it is not necessary that we shall; however, Jesus says, "If any one willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself."

So the author of the Hebrew Letter simply states the above essentials as accepted experienced facts on which he founds his argument for the superiority of Christ and his system of work and worship. Accordingly, the same are herein so accepted without apology, and made the foundation for Christian unity. This is done, realizing that there are those that do not accept all of these as facts. There are those who even deny the existence of God; others that accept the existence of God, but deny that He has spoken to man; still others that accept these two facts, but deny His Son Jesus Christ; and still others that accept these three, but deny man and the church.

But any who deny one or all of these essentials of Christianity cannot be said to be Christian, and are beyond the scope of this book. All such may be far from or near to the kingdom of Heaven, and are subjects for the same, but not for Christian unity. This book has to do only with those that in one form or another accept these essential truths,—God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and the church,—and endeavors to bring all to think together upon the same toward unity.

Even those who accept the above truths need to see them anew, especially in their relationship to the problem of Christian unity. In our consideration of and devotion to minor matters, we have lost sight of these great truths, and drifted far afield and apart in our religious life and activities. Like the Jews of old we have been so given over to the tithing of denominational “mint, anise and cummin” and other little things sectarian and divisive that we have forgotten the weightier matters of the Christian religion,—God, His Word, His Son, man and the church,—and need therefore to be called back to these great verities of Christian faith and life into unity upon the same.

While this book proposes an exposition of the above truths as the intellectual foundation for Christian unity, the author does not intend thereby to make the impression that Christian unity is wholly intellectual. Christianity also has its great emotional and ethical verities such as “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control,” “faith, justice, mercy,” “diligence, virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love,” “like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded,” etc., which

are essentials of Christianity, and equal in importance with the above intellectual verities; but they do not constitute a barrier to Christian unity, because there are no differences over these emotional and ethical essentials. For this reason, some advocates of Christian unity propose unity upon emotional and ethical values alone, which all accept; but Christian unity cannot come by ignoring all intellectual values. A unity that is not founded on some great intellectual convictions would be a mere emotional and ethical union, which could not be binding and lasting. Christianity makes its appeal to the whole man, his body, his mind, his heart and his will; and Christian unity must do the same, and therefore make the intellectual appeal. Such great religious truths as God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church cannot be set aside as nonessentials for Christian unity, because they constitute the very essence of Christianity. Notwithstanding the difficulties to Christian unity, which they involve, Christian unity could not be Christian without some intellectual agreement on these great truths.

Accordingly, Christian unity is not an association of free thinkers. While Christianity stands for freedom of thought and speech, it does not permit false thinking any more than it permits false living. There is such a thing as orthodox thinking as well as orthodox living; and the one largely determines the other. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Right thinking is essential to right living. Christianity does not, therefore, permit one to think anything that he sees fit about God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church. Jesus Christ came into this world that man might know the truth about these essentials of religion; and Christian unity

must be founded upon this truth. The plea for orthodox thinking can be easily abused, and has often been made the justification for intolerant dogmatism, which has been a fertile cause of divisions in the church; but this is no reason for abandoning the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity. When these great facts of Christianity; namely, God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church, are abandoned, or regarded as mere religious opinions and nonessentials, then there is no rock foundation for Christianity left, which Jesus insisted upon as necessary, but only shifting sand. The problem of Christian unity is to bring all to think together upon these essentials of Christianity; and this book is directed toward this end. At least let us endeavor to think together toward unity along these essential lines. We feel that there is a need of such a study and discussion, as is expressed in the following quotation from the *American Church Monthly*, New York.

MAKESHIFTS FOR UNITY

"Most of us realize, at least subconsciously, that the supreme need of our time is the reunion of the shattered fragments of Christendom. Yet there is a danger, just because the need is so acute, that we should weakly acquiesce in any remedy that our well-meaning neighbors proffer to us on the ground that any remedy is better than none. For [most of these current remedies are only temporary makeshifts, and can never restore organic unity in Christ.

"There are those who believe, for instance, that there is some magical charm in union services. If only Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Congregational, Methodist, and Unitarian neighbors can meet together on the lawn in front of the church on Sunday evenings in summer and sing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' and 'I Need Thee Every Hour,' and listen to readings from the Scriptures by the Methodist minister and prayer by the Unitarian minister, and a brisk sermonette on brotherly love by the Congregational minis-

ter, it is confidently hoped that all our differences will disappear. The real result of such gatherings, of course, is that the people who take part in them will gradually become convinced that it makes no difference what we believe so long as we can sit elbow to elbow and sing hymns together. In other words, it makes no difference what we think about God or what is our spiritual and moral relationship to Jesus Christ, if only we are on speaking terms with our neighbors. It ought not to take them long to make the inference that the church is of no practical value at all and that any lodge or fraternal organization would do just as well."

All the above essentials; namely, God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church, were not treated at the Lausanne Conference. The Conference was limited by its name or call, Faith and Order; however, its scope was extended beyond this call. It was made to cover such subjects as The Call to Unity, The Message of the Church, The Nature of the Church, The Confession of Faith, The Ministry and the Sacraments, all of which has to do with the church. While no subject that touches the problem of unity was excluded from the Conference, little or no attention was given to the other above essentials of Christianity. While most of the barriers to unity are in the church, which was fully treated, yet the other essentials—God, His Word, His Son and His creature, man—cannot be ignored in any full treatise of the subject of Christian unity. So in addition to the subjects treated at Lausanne, a fuller treatise is herein proposed, covering the essentials,—God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church.

CHAPTER II

GOD



OD is the first word of the next, and is the essential fact of all religion. The idea of God springs from man's nature and being, and is an intuitive conviction with practically all people. The reality of God's being is not questioned by Christians, but is accepted as the first essential truth of Christianity. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is," is the first essential requirement of Christianity, and therefore the same of Christian unity, which seeks the unity of all those that so believe. The subject of God in its relation to Christian unity was not treated at Lausanne, but was rather taken for granted. The idea and spirit of God was in all the meetings, and His presence was felt and realized by all. There was a feeling, "Except God build the house" for Christian unity, we build in vain, so the leading of His Spirit was sought in all that was said and done. Such a faith and spirit are essential to unity; but Christian unity requires that we go beyond this assumed general faith in God to a specific faith in Him, which is Christian faith. There are innumerable faiths about God in the world, but Christian unity requires Christian faith in Him. If we are to have Christian unity, it is necessary that we think together about God, and thereby be brought into some intellectual accord on Him, which constitutes the theme of this chapter.

No effort will be made to prove the existence of God. Jesus did not argue for the existence of God, but spoke to Him, and communed with Him under all circumstances. In fact, the existence of God cannot be demonstrated; but God can nevertheless be experimentally seen and known in all that He has said and done; and His living presence in the world is an experienced fact, which was the attitude and faith of Jesus and Paul. Paul says, "The invisible things of Him since the foundation of the world are clearly seen," and "He is not very far from any of us, because in Him we live and move and have our being." Or as Augustine has expressed it, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we are restless until we find rest in Thee."

God is, therefore, no mere abstraction nor subjective state of mind, but a real objective Being, who can be known and experienced by all. So His existence must not be explained away as a mere psychological or material "entity." God is not matter, force, intelligence, will, love, or any other mere abstract quality. "Abiding values" or human qualities do not constitute God. God cannot be identified with anything within or without man. Nor is God the sum total of things and beings or the mere embodiment of all moral and spiritual good. God cannot be locked up and confined thus in either nature or the mind of man, but is a free independent Being back of and over all things and beings. "There is one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." In other words, Christianity is not Pantheism but Monotheism, the God of which is a real objective Being, who is in, above, beyond and over man and the universe of created things and beings. Furthermore, while He is the great ultimate cause of all things and beings, He is not mere

blind force, which materialistic science calls God, but is the source and destiny of all energy and life. He is not in and of the universe in any pantheistic sense, but is rather independent and sovereign over nature and man, not as a despot but as a directing Providence. He is both *immanent* and *eminent* in the universe, and is the intelligent ruler of the same. These statements about God are made not in any attempt to define God, which cannot be done, but more to declare the reality of His existence. He is a real Being, Jehovah, whose very name, "I AM THAT I AM," declares His existence. While all have wide liberty to say what God is and what He is not, yet, if we are to have Christian unity, all must agree in saying that God really exists in some real independent sense.

As to the nature of God's existence and being, there must be the largest individual liberty of view, which is consistent with the Christian conception of God. Just here we enter the realm of theology, which has been a fertile field of divisions. There have been many systems of theology, all claiming to be Christian, which were elaborate and exhaustive of even the difference between Tweedle *dee* and Tweedle *dum*; but all such systems have been divisive instead of unifying. Every such expression of God has been found inadequate and unsatisfactory for Christian unity. In fact, God is too great for definite expression and human grasp. He cannot be put thus into such small containers as human words and ideas. So there must, therefore, be the largest individual liberty in the conception and expression of the nature and being of God. There can be no hope of complete intellectual unity and conformity in this realm; however, such conformity is not necessary for Christian unity.

But each should see to it that his conception of God is truly Christian, and does not contradict any of the known facts of life. God is the God of all life, and He must not be brought into conflict with Himself. Let Him be found true to Himself, and all man's conceptions of Him false. The God of science is the same as the God of religion, so there must be no conflicts in these realms; however, we must be sure of the facts in both realms before we draw conclusions, because there can be no conflicts between true science and true religion.

But, notwithstanding our individual liberty of conception and expression, the Christian conception of God must be preserved in Christian unity. There are such widely different conceptions of God to-day that they can hardly be said to be of the same God, or at least not of the Christian God. There has been a marked change in people's conception of God in recent years. The God of the old theology has been passing, and giving place to a new conception, which has produced confusion and uncertainty in many to-day. Doctor Swain, in his book, *What and Where Is God*, records the following case of a minister's wife, which is typical of many others, as follows:

"I have no God. They have taken Him away, and I do not know where to find Him. My childhood conception of a man-God on a throne in heaven is gone—and I think rightly gone; but I have nothing to take its place. I hear them speak of an immanent God, of God who fills all nature; and I have no objection to this except that it brings no relief. Nature is so inexpressibly vast and complex that, to my mind, a God who fills all nature is so big and spread out that I can neither know Him nor love Him. He is altogether too attenuated for me; besides, this makes Him so much *everywhere* that He seems to be *nowhere*. Here I am without a God, working myself to death in a great church; and my heart is nearly breaking for a Father to

whom I can go, as I once did, with all my hopes and fears. Moreover, all my young women friends feel as I do. We often speak of this among ourselves without knowing where to turn for relief."

'Thus, in giving up the old and false conception of God, the true Christian conception of God has not been found. While the Christian concept of God cannot be theologically expressed, yet it has been clearly revealed, and can be known. It is revealed in and through Jesus Christ. Jesus did not teach a new God, but only brought a fuller and truer revelation of the God of the Jews. It has been truly said that the Jews gave God to the world. Their conception of Him was erroneous in some respects, but in the main they knew the one true living God. Jesus corrected and added to the Jewish revelation; and he so fully and clearly revealed God to man that his conception of God has become the common possession of all Christians, and upon this all Christians can unite. Christians may differ over their deductions and interpretations of this revelation of God in Jesus; but they largely agree on the major features of the same. Christians will be surprised to learn through an exchange of views of God that they have so much in common. Let us now note some of the things commonly believed by Christians about God, which is the foundation for Christian unity.

First, He is the *living* God, who can be known and trusted. He is essentially life and not force, as materialists teach. He does not derive life, but is life, and has life, and is the source of all life. "With Him is the fountain of life," says David; and, "The Father hath life in Himself," says Jesus.

Second, as to the nature of His being, "God is *spirit*,"

according to Jesus; and David implies the same in the 139th Psalm. As to the exact form of His being, some hold that He is a personal being, because personality is the highest form of being known; and for this reason many refer to God in anthropomorphic terms; but a higher or better conception of God's being than Christ's cannot be conceived: "God is spirit." Spirit is the ultimate of all being, so the mind is unable to conceive of anything beyond spirit. Spirit is the final explanation of all things and beings, even God, and beyond this nothing can be said or imagined. Spirit does not permit of definition, because there are no words and ideas beyond spirit to express it. We can say what spirit is not, and define it negatively. For instance, it is not a ghost, as the old translations would lead one to think; nor is it breath or air, as the Greek word might lead one to conclude. It is not "attenuated gas," a "wreath of vapor," or "ether," as some seem to think; nor is it "the one universal substance," as New Thought teaches. All such conceptions of spirit are materialistic and crude. It is the essence of being, which is about equivalent to saying that spirit is spirit. Christ's simple though profound statement, "God is spirit," is about all that can be said; and upon this Christians are agreed.

As to the form of God, it is folly to speculate; yet we cannot say that God has no form, because spirit may have form as it does in human beings. Whether man's body is the form or instrument of his spirit we cannot say; but we are conscious of a spiritual form in man. In fact, we cannot conceive of God without some form. He may have form, and still be infinite, because form does not necessarily limit. But all such is mere speculative

theology, and has no place in the foundation for Christian unity. We mention such views only to exclude them as essentials for unity. There must be liberty of view about all such matters.

Third, God is revealed as an intelligent Being, who thinks, knows, wills, sees, hears, speaks, loves, hates, etc., and exercises all the faculties and functions of an intelligent spiritual being. These are human faculties, it is true, but the human mind cannot conceive of any higher faculties to ascribe to God, and Christ reveals no other. So we ascribe the perfection of these faculties to God, such as omniscience, omnipotence, unchangeable will, perfect love, unlimited mercy, unerring justice, perfect holiness and goodness; but this does not make God into a superman, as some claim. He is not a mere man "with legs and whiskers a trifle longer," as has been charged; but, inasmuch as man was created in God's image, God and man must be alike, that is, possess the same traits and faculties. According to Jesus and those who spoke for him, the supreme trait of God is love; but this does not exclude law. "Love is the fulfillment of the law"; that is, God governs by law, which is love. His will is sovereign; but His will is prompted by love. While God was love to Jesus, at the same time He was a Being to be obeyed and followed even through Gethsemane.

Fourth, as to the character of God, Jesus says that He is "the Father." This was a new revelation of God. Christ dwelt at length on the fatherhood of God. He not only declared Him to be "the Father," but he called Him "Father," and taught all to say "Our Father." He preached sermons on the fatherhood of God, and set Him forth as such in parable and story. The fatherhood of God with

its corollary, the brotherhood of man, was central and vital in the teaching of Jesus. He reasoned in terms of the Father, and he labored to do the will of the Father. To him faith was a childlike trust in the Father; repentance was a turning to the Father; obedience was the doing of the will of the Father; hope was the looking forward to the promises of the Father; providence was the loving oversight of the Father; prayer was the petitioning of the Father; in fact, all his teaching was colored and shaped by this conception of God. Instead of the monarchical monotheism of the Jews he taught a patristic monotheism. He thereby took theology out of the schools of the prophets and rabbis, and placed it in the homes, where little children say, "Our Father"; and this one word shed a flood of light upon the character of God.

But the word "Father" is a human term, and too small to fully express the Heavenly Father. No earthly father ever approached the character of the Heavenly Father. Hence the necessity for the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, so Jesus was able to say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I and the Father are one." "If you had known me, you would have known the Father also; from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." This incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ was the only way of fully revealing God to man. Jesus Christ was God in the concrete, without which incarnation God would have always remained in the abstract, and largely unknown to man; but in the life, person and character of Jesus we may see and know God. Anyone, therefore, that would know God must make much of the study of Jesus Christ. Many to-day desire to know God, but they shrink from this revelation of Him in Jesus

Christ. They seem to prefer to leave the object of their faith undefined in the misty hazes of the abstract and unseen. They reach out their hands in the darkness, and feel a clasp, but see no face or hear no voice. Their vision of God is of the twilight, and the twilight has a charm that they are loath to dispel by the full vision of God in Christ. All such need to turn on the light from the radiant face and form of Jesus Christ, and there behold the glory of the Father. Thus, "We all with unveiled faces beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory." Jesus was the unveiling of the Father, so no higher, truer thing can be said of God than that He is Christlike. Jesus is the ideal for God as well as man; and in him the human and the divine meet and blend, and find perfection. Doctor Fosdick says: "What is the truth about God? has been answered for us in Christ. He is the best that we know, and we will not interpret God in terms less than that."

The above are some of the things about God taught by Jesus and held in common or generally believed by all Christians, and constitute adequate or sufficient grounds for Christian unity. Not that the above statements are adequate, or are accepted by all Christians, but the facts which the above attempts to express are true and accepted by all. We shall never be able to unite on any human credal statement of these facts, because these truths about God cannot be thus expressed to the satisfaction of all. After we have said all about God that we know or believe, we are still unable to fully express Him. In fact, the Christian God cannot be expressed in words. He is a Being to be realized and experienced in one's life more

than stated in mental categories. God is not in outward mental forms so much as in inner experiences. "In Him we live and move and have our being." Accordingly, "Enoch walked with God"; and God was the shepherd of David's soul. Those that speak in the Bible do not speak *about* God, but they speak *to* Him. They make no effort to describe or express God in words, but simply relate their experiences of God in their lives. This was the heart of Christ's revelation of God, revealing Him as Father, who lovingly and sympathetically entered into all of man's experiences. "If any man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Christian unity, therefore, must come more upon this common experience of God in life than upon any intellectual agreement about God. "There is one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all," says Paul, in giving the doctrinal foundation for Christian unity; and, when all come to know God thus, we will have unity upon Him.

Much has been said and written also about the Trinity, which is a mysterious fact for acceptance and not speculation. All Christians accept the fact of the Trinity, but differ widely over the interpretation and expression of the same. There is in man a like triune nature, which is no less a mystery than the divine Trinity; but we cannot be dogmatic about matters about which we know so little. Theories about the Trinity should not keep people apart when so little is known about it. There is no hope of all to believe alike about the Trinity, but all who believe in the fact of the Trinity may unite upon this faith. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and

communion of the Holy Spirit," expresses a truth that all believe.

Finally, when all that we know about God is said, the largest liberty of individual view must be granted. All see God, but all do not see him alike. While God is fundamentally the same yesterday, to-day and forever, yet He has not always been seen as we know him to-day. The concept of God is a growing concept. It has grown as the revelation and knowledge of God has been received. The revelation and discovery of God has been progressive, "here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept." There is in the Bible, as Doctor Fosdick shows, a far step in progressive revelation and conception of God as seen in Jehovah, the God of the Jews only, to the God and Father of all, the far-away feared Being to the loving Father; the localized idea of God, to His universality; from His interest in the nation, to His interest in the individual; from the cruel conception of God, who sacrifices man for the Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36), to the God that sacrifices the Sabbath for man (Mark 2:23-24, 26-27); from the God who destroys little children (2 Kings 2:23-24), to the God who takes them in His arms (Mark 10:13-16, etc.). God has been discovered and revealed as man's capacity for knowing God has been developed; and this acquired knowledge of God has been handed down to succeeding ages, and finally collected and embodied in the Bible. Thus man's concept of God has grown as he received new light and revelation, or discovered for himself the truth about God. The revelation of God in Old Testament times was meager, and accommodated to the understanding of an ignorant and undeveloped people, so the people's conception of God was limited, and in some cases

mistaken, as in the time of Judges and degenerate kings of Israel. Even in Christ's day the people had false conceptions of God; but, correcting these and adding to what they had learned of God, Jesus brought forth from his storehouse of wisdom "both the old and the new" revelations of God, and thus taught God to the people, and thereby developed their spiritual faculties for knowing God. Likewise Paul prayed that God would give to those to whom he wrote, "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him," that they might "be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man, and they be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of God." Knowing and comprehending God is man's greatest mental and spiritual undertaking, which requires great wisdom and strong mental and spiritual development. We are not able yet to grasp Him fully. We shall have to grow a great deal yet to be able to fully comprehend God. In fact, we shall have to, as Paul says, "be filled unto all the fulness of God" to be able to know Him fully. So, in our quest for God to-day, we need this spiritual faculty to know God, "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" and "to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." To this end all need to keep their minds and hearts open and alert to every old and new revelation of God. Some ignore or reject the old, and seek only the new, forgetting that "God has spoken unto the Fathers in the prophets," which revelation cannot be ignored or rejected in our quest for Him. No conception of God can be true that is a denial of the God of the past, because God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Others reject all new revelations of Him,

and seek only the old; but there is doubtless yet new light to break forth from what is revealed of God in the Bible, and who knows but what God will make other revelations of Himself to man? How to conserve the knowledge of God from the past and to add new knowledge to the same is our problem to-day; and all can unite in this holy quest for the true and perfect knowledge and experience of God. Then let no venerated system of theology become a barrier between those who seek God through Jesus Christ. We may not be able to agree fully in all our conceptions and interpretations of God; and it is not necessary for Christian unity that we do; but we can nevertheless seek and worship Him together. Though differing about God, we can love God supremely, which is the first and greatest command of Jesus; and this love of God is sufficient ground for unity on God.

However, there is a remarkable agreement among modern thinkers in their conceptions of God. The immanence of God is prominent in all thinking about God to-day. Both Jesus and Paul endeavored to impress this upon all, saying, "Neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father," but everywhere "in spirit and in truth," because "God is Spirit." "God is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being." Or, as Mrs. Browning has poetically expressed it:

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes."

Or, by George Gowen in—

WHERE GOD IS

"In the splendor of the midnight; in the freshness of the
morn;
In the majesty of the thunder when the skies are lightning
torn;
In the shimmer and the glimmer of the moonlight on the
sea:
In all thy great handiwork, I see and worship—Thee!

"Thou—the gilding of the sunlight! Thou—the silver of
the rain!
Thou—the rippling of the breezes over fields of springing
grain!
Thou—the sweep of upland meadows, all with milky
daisies starred!
Thou—the rainbow's iridescence on the beetle's golden
shard!

"Thou—the marching up through centuries, of life, the
undismayed;
Up from chaos; up through conflict; never daunted nor
afraid;
From the cell that knew but hunger up to man who guesseth
Thee!
Thou art matter! Thou art Spirit! Thou—the riddle—
Thou—the key!

"Warring waves of joy and sorrow, hate and love and space
and time,
Sink to calm upon the vastness of Thy shoreless sea sublime!
Thou—the finite, star and blossom; pride of man and
sparrow's fall,
Thou—the infinite, transcending, comprehending, hushing
all!"

CHAPTER III

HIS WORD



OD *hath spoken to us*" is the second essential fact of Christianity expressed in the text. Almost everyone believes in the existence of God, but some deny that He *has spoken to man*. But, what does it matter, if there is a God, if He has not spoken to man, and thereby revealed His word and will? However, the proof of His having spoken to man lies beyond the scope of this book. This fact is taken for granted, as it is in the text, and is made the second fundamental in the foundation for Christian unity. As shown in the preceding chapter the Christian God is an intelligent Being, who thinks and speaks, and whose word may be known and trusted. His revealed word constitutes the second essential truth of Christianity; and Christian unity, therefore, seeks the union of all those who believe in the revelation of God's word.

God's word is truth to all who believe in divine revelation, and is, therefore, the standard of authority in religion. Broadly speaking, truth is the only true standard of authority. "The firm foundation of God standeth," which, Paul says, is "the truth" (2 Tim. 2:15-19). Any other foundation or standard of authority is shifting sand, so the quest for authority is but the quest for truth; but "What is truth?" is the perplexing question that confronts all seekers after true religion. The only satisfactory

answer that has ever been given is that given by Jesus, "God's word is truth." If God has spoken to man, His word must be truth, which is the true standard of authority in religion. But, when we have said this, we have not settled, but only raised the question of authority in religion, which has been the most perplexing and divisive of all religious questions. All Christians believe that God has spoken to man, and His word is final in authority; but they differ widely over what constitutes the word of God, and where His word is to be found. Differences on authority in religion are the most important, and mark the widest cleavages in the church. The question of authority cuts down through the very heart of religion, and determines the lines of union and division. Without a common standard of authority there is no way of determining the false from the true, and hence no way of arriving at agreement. It is like going into business without true weights and measures, or like starting on an unknown journey without chart or compass. Unless people can agree on a final authority in religion, they will go their several ways, and separate and divide according to the final authority that each accepts.

But, strange to say, the question of authority in religion was entirely ignored at the Lausanne Conference, which resulted in confusion in the end. Groups, holding different standards of authority, were allowed to move along blindly together until near the end, when they began to file protests and exceptions to the findings of the Conference, which, of course, was inevitable, holding, as they did, to different authorities in religion. One member of the Conference referred privately to the Eastern Orthodox members as "being led up a blind alley by those who were

avoiding the question of authority in religion"; and it proved to be so in the end. The Eastern Orthodox members held much in common with the other members of the Conference, and accepted the reports as they were framed; but in the end they were able to accept none of the reports except one, because the reports were not founded on their authority, the traditions of the church. Without a common authority it is useless to start toward unity. It is futile to undertake to unite people holding to different authorities, because this difference will overbalance all their agreements. This question must be considered first, and agreeably settled before we can have any real lasting unity.

The question of final authority is too broad and intricate for brief discussion, so only a general survey of the subject will be attempted in this chapter, hoping to find at least sufficient common ground for Christian unity. In brief, there are five theoretical standards of authority; namely, nature, the Pope, traditions and decisions of the church, the Bible and human experience, which have been and are to-day accepted as final in authority. Let us now look into the merits of these claims of final authority and the hope of unity upon the same.

First, there is the word of God as expressed in nature, or natural law, which naturalists and materialists make the only authority in religion. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." Beyond this naturalists and materialists deny all revealed religion. The cosmic revelation of God's word is authoritative in the realm of science but not exclusively authoritative in religion, because religion

deals largely with the *super*-natural, so its final authority must be supernatural. While Christianity seeks to know and follow God as revealed in nature, it does not stop with this revelation, but seeks for further revelation; and in this sense it is not a natural religion; however, its revelation from other sources is both natural and normal. There can, therefore, be no conflicts between true natural science and the Christian religion, because they are complementary revelations of God's truth,—the one in the realm of matter and the other in the realm of spirit and the one blending into the other. Accordingly, science must become increasingly more Christian, and Christianity increasingly more scientific. However, the surrender of province after province of faith in an effort to establish "a scientific frontier" for religion is a mistake. This reduces religion to the plain of science; whereas it transcends science. Scientists themselves are beginning to talk of higher spiritual laws beyond the known natural laws, which they sense through the faculty of faith. Faith is a factor in natural science; but in religion it is the leading guiding function. While Christian faith is a mental conviction that grows out of evidence (Heb. 11:1), and therefore reasonable, yet it outruns reason, blazing the way to truth. Reason is supreme in science; but in religion, faith is supreme. All the great accomplishments and discoveries in religion have been achievements of faith. (See Heb. 11.) While religion and science are allies, religion cannot be patterned after science. There is a remarkable parallel of laws in both, which Doctor Drummond shows in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*; but natural law cannot be made the standard of authority in the spiritual world, because the laws of spirit often transcend the laws of

nature, so we must look elsewhere for final authority in religion.

Next, there is the authority of the church expressed through the Pope or ecumenical conference, which is the ultimate authority with many. This theory of authority rests upon the infallibility of Pope or the infallibility of the church, which requires too much credulity to be accepted by most Christians. History is too full of the mistakes of both for such a claim to be accepted by those who think and act for themselves in religion. Anyone who accepts this standard of authority must bring himself to say, "My church right or wrong." This is not good patriotism and worse religion. Such loyalty is morally unsound, and requires the surrender of all religious freedom, in which Paul exhorts all Christians to stand fast. The defense of this standard of authority is the divine right of the Roman See and Apostolic Succession, which is without Scriptural or historic justification. In substantiation of this position, we quote from the *Living Church*, commenting upon a statement by Lord Halifax, "that unless Anglicans are prepared to recognize the primacy of the Holy See as being *jure divino* there is no hope of reunion with Rome," as follows:

"But the question is not whether unity can or can not be secured without accepting any given position, but, Is it true?

"If the principle is true, we are bound to accept it, not because its acceptance will promote the cause of reunion, but because it is true. And, on the other hand, unless we are convinced that it is true, it would be almost blasphemous for us to profess it, even though that profession would bring unity at once to the Church. It is far better to have a divided Church with one part right, than a

united Church affirming with unanimity a principle that is wrong.

"What, then, is the authority upon which we are to hold that the bishop of Rome has, by Divine right, a permanent primacy in the Church?

"There certainly is no statement to that effect in the Scriptures. It is purely an inference (with much in its favor) that St. Peter had any preëminence among the Apostles; it is only another inference (with considerable to be said for it) that St. Peter was ever bishop of Rome; it is only a third inference (with nothing, really, to be said for it) that if St. Peter had any personal preëminence, it was preëminence that was to be attached to his successors in the bishopric of Rome; and it is only a fourth inference (with great improbability to be said of it) that if such preëminence were divinely attached to that See, it was of such a final and permanent character that, for cause, it could not be forfeited. On the strength of this chain of four inferences, each of which depends upon the others, and two of which can scarcely be dignified by any stronger term than imaginings or guesses, we are asked to agree, in the interest of reunion, on a Roman primacy by Divine right."

Others, who reject the authority of the Pope, accept the authority of the church, transmitted through Apostolic Succession and expressed in the traditions of the church. Ecumenical decisions and traditions of the church are accepted as equal in authority with the New Testament Scriptures. But the claim of Apostolic Succession and the authority of the church based upon the same are likewise without justification. The New Testament provides for no successor to Peter nor for a divine order descending from him. Even those that contend for this theory admit that there is a period between the Apostles and the organization of the church upon this basis that cannot be historically established. At least there is a doubtful period here and a gap in the succession that cannot be closed up. Besides, there are those to-day that question the authority

of Peter himself, so the theory would not insure unity, if it could be proved. Furthermore, *what* church is final in authority? Catholics answer, "The Holy Catholic Church, the one and only Church"; but this is a mere begging of the question. The Catholic Church *per se* has no better claim of authority than the Protestant Church. If the church had remained united, there might have been some grounds for the authority of the church; but whatever claim of authority it has, is annulled by its division.

While the church can never be the ultimate authority for all Christians, there is, as Dr. John Kelman well states, a certain authority that attaches to the church that should not be denied or ignored.

"The accumulated wisdom and experience is surely likely to be wiser and richer in gifts of the Spirit than any individual mind can be. When we consider the quality, both intellectually and morally, of many of the church's guides, we are constrained to confess that it would be only the most presumptuous individualism which would discount the testimony of so many great intellects, so many pure and lofty spirits, and so many centuries of faith. Surely all those high and choice souls have not lived and thought in vain; and there is a kind of arrogance, which is the fruit of littleness rather than greatness, in those that underrate the past."

The whole church has herein a priceless heritage, which it can ill afford to lose by its rejection of the church as the final authority; and it is not necessary for it to lose these treasures from the past. They belong to the whole church, and may be held sacred without being authoritative. However, the Catholic claim, "*Semper, ubique et ab omnibus*," is without Scriptural or historic foundation. There is no set of doctrines or mode of worship that has always, everywhere, and by all, been held; and it is only ignorance

or blind prejudice that leads one to make such a claim. A mere *ipse dixit* of the Pope or the assembled church cannot revoke or change the facts.

Next, there is the authority of the Bible. Protestants rejected the infallible church, and substituted the infallible Bible as the standard of authority, which has been the accepted authority among Protestants. This position involves the many theories of the inspiration of the Bible, which cannot be harmonized, or be made to account for all known facts. People are better informed to-day about the Bible, which makes many of these theories untenable. Many know how the Bible came, that it did not drop down from the skies just so. There are many human elements in the Bible; namely, the recording, the transcribing, the preserving, the collecting and authenticating from numberless manuscripts and quotations, the translating, the canonizing, etc., all of which were done by fallible men, which makes the theory of verbal inspiration, or the inerrancy of the Scriptures untenable. Besides, an infallible book must be consistent and in harmony with itself, which cannot be shown for the Bible except by allegorical interpretation of much of it, which is questionable. Furthermore, if all could be brought to accept the infallibility of the Bible, this would not insure unity in the future any more than it has in the past. Until recent years practically all Protestants accepted the Bible as their standard of authority; but this did not keep them together, because they differed widely over the interpretation of it, and divided accordingly into the many prevailing branches, so there is, therefore, no hope of unity on this basis. The Fundamentalists of to-day are still insisting upon the Bible as the only standard of authority

in religion; but in the light of the knowledge of the Bible to-day and in the light of the Bible itself this position cannot be sustained.

While the Bible for the above reasons cannot be final in authority for all Christians, yet it is essential to Christianity. It has other essential uses. Paul did not claim final authority for the Scriptures; but he said that they are "profitable" for many essential needs of the church such as "teaching, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness," etc., and "were written for our admonition." Jesus himself used, and had great respect and devotion for the sacred Scriptures of the Jews to "the last jot and tittle" of the same; but he never appealed to them as final in authority. Of course, the references of Jesus and Paul were to the Old Testament Scriptures; but they did not in any way indicate the finality of the New Testament Scriptures, which were not then written. If the unwritten Scriptures had been intended as final in authority, surely Christ or Paul would have so declared. The New Testament Scriptures, as we will show, also have an essential use, but not as the standard of authority in religion.

Next, there is "religious experience," or the inner consciousness of truth, which many to-day make the ultimate authority. This is the position of the Modernists of to-day. They declare against all external authority, and set up within man's heart the seat of authority, as the following quotations from leaders show:

"A final seat of authority in religion is a vain quest, outside the soul of man and its intimacy with the Spirit of the Almighty and Eternal. No man can be our authority, no council, no church, no book, and no library of books. There

is no authority outside of the sovereign soul of man and its intimate relations with its Maker.”—BURRIS A. JENKINS.

“All professed authority must ultimately be proved by its conformity with the facts of inner experience. . . . Apart from our inner experience and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, there is no conceivable authority to any person or any thing which might come between Himself and the spirit of man. He still maintains His great prerogative of speaking directly to the souls of His children.”—JOHN KELMAN.

“The one sole authority, to which the soul can bow uttering its consenting ‘Amen,’ is the inner testimony of the Spirit. The seat of authority is the soul, but the source is God.”—PROFESSOR J. A. ROBERTSON, Aberdeen, Scotland.

“The abiding continuum of Christianity lies in basic experiences which phrase and rephrase themselves in different forms of thought. . . . The emphasis of liberals rests upon experience; we regard that, rather than mental formulas, as the permanent continuum of the Gospel; we proclaim our freedom from mental formulas of the past.”—HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

Experience is an important factor in Christianity,—in fact, any religion that cannot be experienced, or does not appeal to the highest and best in man, is a false religion; and Christianity has nothing to fear from such a test; but to make human experience final in authority involves serious difficulties. First, if there is no authority but internal, then everyone is an authority unto himself, which results in individualism rather than unity. Second, if man himself is to be the ultimate judge, then religion is reduced to the plane of human beings, and can never lift men to higher planes of living. There can be little or no sense of sin and human need, from which men climb upon rounds of their dead selves to planes of higher and holier living. Dean Ingle put his finger on a glaring deficiency of Modernists, when he said, “I regard the defective sense of sin as the chief flaw in liberal Christians.” Professor Peabody,

of Harvard, a Unitarian Modernist, deplores this need in his own communion, saying, "To train the modern world in a freedom which is reverent and in a hope which is humble, still remains the task of the church of the spirit." With no authority above man himself this can never be done, because a freedom that does not recognize some external authority cannot have a sense of sin and humility. As Paul states, "I had not known sin, except through the law." Those who lead in this movement for human experience as the ultimate authority confess this evident weakness of this system. Note these words of Doctor Fosdick, "Now abide three perils of liberalism—irreverence, sentimentality, and ethical disloyalty to Jesus,—and the greatest of these is ethical disloyalty to Jesus." Religion must be from above and beyond man to elevate and save him.

Furthermore, if God speaks directly to the individual, which is contrary to Bible revelation, then His revelation through others as the Prophets and Apostles is largely useless. God may speak directly to the individual, as He has often done; but the authority of such a revelation cannot extend beyond the individual. What use would we have for prophets, apostles, preachers, Bibles, or even for Jesus Christ, if he is to be brought to judgment before the final court of man's experience and reason? Also, when the human soul is made the final judge and arbiter, a responsibility is placed upon it that the average person cannot successfully bear and fulfill. Rare and specially endowed spirits might be equal to such a responsibility; but the masses could not wisely and successfully decide such important matters. In most cases it would be a case of the blind leading themselves; and such would surely fall into the ditch of religious error.

Finally, the claim that God speaks directly to the individual leads to uncertainty and mysticism in religion. It is easy to doubt "the small voice from within"; and often it leads far afield in mystical realms. There can be no certainty and little assurance and confidence under such a position. For the above reasons and others, there is little hope of unity with human experience and reason on the throne of authority. There are, to be sure, "abiding experiences which constitute the continuum of the Gospel"; but the human soul is not always capable of deciding for itself what these are.

But it is urged in favor of human experience and reason as the standard of authority in religion that it is final in every other realm, and religion should be no exception. Religion is not an exception. Truth, and not experience, is final in all realms. It is a question of what truth is; and many do not believe that the convictions of the human heart are always true. They are often found to be untrue in science as well as religion. In fact, human experience is not an infallible guide in any realm. Jesus set aside all human standards of authority when he commanded to "call no man rabbi nor father nor master" in religion; and this includes self. In conclusion, therefore, all the above standards of authority in religion, namely, natural law, the church, the Bible and human experience, are without divine authority, and have been found inadequate for Christian unity.

In view of the above, some have been led to conclude that there is no divine standard of authority in religion; that is, divine authority in religion has no foundation in fact. They speak of "the religion of the spirit" in contrast with "religions of authority," which to them have

no foundation in fact. The question of authority is tabooed in such circles; and to mention such identifies one with the 'dead religions of the past. But the demand for authority in religion cannot be thus set aside. It is too deeply rooted in human experience and reason to be thrown out of court as a false claim. Without some standard of authority in religion there would be no way of determining the true from the false, the right from the wrong. As Paul says, "I had not known sin without the law." Without a standard of authority in religion, religious life would be like starting out on an unknown journey without chart or compass, or going into business without true weights and measures. Or, at least without a common standard of authority in religion there can be no hope of Christian unity, because there would be nothing in common on which Christians could stand together.

Before we conclude that there is no authority in religion that all can accept, let us consider the standard affirmed in the text, which we are studying, "God hath spoken unto us *in His Son*." Note that the author does not say that God has spoken to us *in nature*, nor *in the Pope*, nor *in the church*, nor *in the Bible*, nor *in man's heart*, but "*in His Son*." Not one of the above standards was held by the author of the Hebrew Letter; but God's word, revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ, is made the standard of authority. Furthermore, when we look into the New Testament for the final authority of others, who speak and write therein, we find that they set up the same standard of authority, Jesus the Son of God. God Himself, if He is correctly reported in Matt. 17:5, declares that Jesus is the authority to be heard by all; and Jesus makes this claim often for himself. (See Matt. 5:21-48; 9:6; 28:18;

Mark 2:27; John 2:13-22; 7:16; 14:6, etc.) He was always reported as "speaking with authority," which distinguished him from the scribes and all other teachers, who appealed to others as final in authority. He often referred to the Scriptures, the Jewish standard of authority, but never appealed to them as final, and showed that they bore witness of his authority. (John 5:39, American Revised Version.) Christ's claim of final authority was often challenged by his hostile hearers. However, he was never presumptuous and arbitrary in enforcing his claim, but instead gave the grounds for the same. (Luke 20:1-7; John 2:19; 5:30-47; 8:12-20; 10:25; 14:1-10.) His first disciples were troubled over this change in authority (John 14:1-10); but after being convinced that God was in Christ they always appealed to him as final in authority; and, when their own authority was challenged, they defended the same by showing their oneness with Christ. (See John 1:1-14; Gal. 1:11-17; 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 1:20-22.)

Jesus is final in authority because of his divine Sonship, which is stated in the text, and declared by the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: Hear ye Him." Christ's authority inheres in his divine Sonship. It is not assumed, received or achieved, but is inherent in his divine nature, "being the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power." To such a transcendent and commanding personality there must be attributed final authority in all things religious. Jesus is, therefore, the final authority in religion, not merely because he was the greatest man that has ever lived in the world, not because he was the world's greatest

teacher, not because he revealed God, nor because of his ideal character, nor because he was the world's greatest example of altruistic love and service,—all these reasons would not have been sufficient to establish his authority,—but because he is the Son of God. If he is the Son of God, then his word must be final in all things religious. The old Protestant slogan, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent," to be Christian, should, therefore, read, "Where Christ speaks, we speak; and where Christ is silent, we are silent," because Christ, and not the Bible, is the final authority in Christianity. Christianity is Christo-centric and not Biblio-centric as Protestantism claims. Protestants as well as Catholics have been off center in authority; but they are fast becoming Christo-centric. Accordingly, their mental and credal categories must be rewritten in harmony with this new center of religion. Old Protestant slogans and principles will not do for Christianity to-day, which is Christo-centric. The old Protestant slogan for Christian unity; namely, "The union of all God's people with the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice," must be rewritten to read, "The union of all God's people with Christ as the only rule of faith and practice." "The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," to be Christian, must be changed to read, "Christ alone is the religion of Christians." We can never unite upon a book, not even the New Testament. The failure of Protestants to effect unity is conclusive proof of this. In fact, Protestants have greatly multiplied divisions, because they could not agree on the interpretation and application of the one Book; but there is little disagreement over the interpretation and application of Christ to life and religion.

There is, therefore, a bright hope of union upon him, and the Christian world is slowly but surely coming together upon him as the final authority in religion.

Furthermore, Christ did not delegate authority to anyone to-day to speak for him; and, when the Pope, the Bishop or the editor of the church paper presumes to do so, they usurp authority that does not belong to them, and rob the church of its authority and freedom in Christ. There is no greater barrier to unity to-day than this assumed authority on the part of men and assemblies of men. The church must be left free to follow Christ alone.

When Jesus is accepted as the final authority in all things religious, all other questions are largely settled. As Robert Browning says:

"The acknowledgment of God in Christ,
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it."

In the first place, it settles the perplexing question as to the right attitude and use of the Bible. If it cannot be made the standard of authority in religion, then what need have we for the Bible? "Much, in every way," says Paul. First, it is "our tutor to bring us to Christ," who is the ultimate authority. This was said of the Old Testament, but it is just as true of the New. The Old Testament leads the way out of the remote past, when the first rays of the coming Messiah began to break on the religious horizon, to the time when Malachi beholds the rising of the sun of righteousness, whom the New Testament reveals in all his beauty and glory,—*"full of grace and truth."* When the Bible is thus read to see Jesus, the Son of God, who is the truth about religion, its difficulties pass as mists

before the rising sun. It is primarily a book that reveals Jesus Christ, who is the truth about religion and, therefore, the standard of authority in religion. It is not a book on science. It contains the cosmic views of those who, in the different ages, looked for the coming of the Messiah, some of which were mistaken views; but this does not invalidate the Bible as a revelation of Jesus Christ. It is not primarily a book of history, although it contains the history of those who sought for the Messiah; and, if some errors should be found in this history, this would not invalidate the Bible as a revelation of the way to Christ. The Bible also contains the religious views of those who sought the Messiah, all of which cannot be harmonized with the full revelation of religion in Christ; but this does not affect or destroy the integrity of the Bible, which was written to lead the way to Christ, but rather establishes it. If the people before Christ had had all the truth about religion, there would have been no need of Christ's coming. The Bible is a progressive revelation of the true religion, which found its full revelation and realization in Christ. As a revelation of Jesus, the Son of God, who is the truth about religion, the Bible is infallible, but in no other sense is it infallible. It is a revelation of "the mind of Christ," who is infallible, and is, therefore, the Christian's ultimate authority in religion.

Paul, therefore, when he was pressed for his credentials for his claim of having "the wisdom of God," replied, "We have the mind of Christ." "The Jews ask for signs (the supernatural), and the Greeks seek after wisdom (human philosophy)," which were the prevailing religious standards of Paul's day; but Paul declared for a *new* standard of authority in religion, Jesus Christ, who is

“the power of God, the wisdom of God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” He is all that is essential for a perfect standard of authority in religion, so his mind is, therefore, final in authority. It was so in Paul’s day, and the same is true to-day, because, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever,” which is a concluding statement by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, which was written to bring the Jews to Christ as the new and perfect standard of authority in religion.

Furthermore, when Paul was pressed for his credentials for having “the mind of Christ,” he replied, “Have I not seen the Lord?” and, uncovering his body, “I bear branded in my body the marks of the Lord.” But, what are *our* credentials to-day for having the mind of Christ? It is this, we have the same “mind of Christ,” which was delivered to Paul and other inspired disciples, and recorded and handed down to us in the records of the New Testament. But can we be sure of these records and the Christ of the same? People to-day are asking, “The mind of *what* Christ is authoritative, the Christ of the first century or the Christ of to-day, the Christ of the sixteenth century or the Christ of the twentieth century? These are questions that are being asked to-day, and must be answered before we can have unity. A University professor said to me, “No one to-day believes in the Christ of the first century.” This may or may not be true; but I replied that I believe in *the Christ of the Bible*, who is the Christ of *all* the centuries. The Christ of the Bible is a clear, definite, true historic character, and is therefore the only real Christ. We do not here raise the question of his historicity, which will be treated later; but if there was a

historic Jesus Christ, he is the Christ of the Bible. It is true that this Christ has been variously conceived by the people of the different ages, but this has been due largely to ignorance and misunderstanding of the Christ of the Bible. Christ is the leading inspiring hope of the Old Testament, and the key to the understanding of the same. He is progressively revealed from the beginning to the end. Isaiah and the later prophets give portrayals of him that are scarcely excelled in vividness and truth by those portrayals of him in the New Testament in the days of his flesh.

When we come into the New Testament, he is a living, moving personality, who is perfectly portrayed by those "who companied with him from the beginning," and could say, "I saw and heard." They give a consistent account of him; and their records either stand or fall together. While the New Testament biographers of Christ—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—depict Jesus upon different backgrounds and from different viewpoints and with different readers in mind, and for these reasons there are minor differences in their records, the harmonizing of which lies beyond the scope of this book, yet they reveal the same Christ in all essential respects, and their biographies show a marvelous agreement, which constitutes the ground for Christian unity. If we reject *their* record, *whose* record shall we accept? The records from which the New Testament is taken can be traced to within thirty to sixty years of the death of Christ; however, the question of the authenticity and credibility of these manuscripts lies beyond the scope of this book. This is the work of modern scholars, whose findings are given in the many modern translations of the Bible, which show a remarkable

agreement; and the same Christ is consistently revealed in all.

So the question resolves itself into whether or not the Christ of the Bible is accepted. Some refuse to accept the Christ of the Bible records, because this conception of Christ comes from "secondary impressions." But what impressions have we that are not secondary? These are the nearest that we have to primary impressions. They were largely written by those that "compained with Christ from the beginning," and could say, "I saw and heard." Besides, these writers had the promise and the possession of the Holy Spirit to "guide them into all truth" about Christ. The modern cry, "Back to Christ over the heads of all his reporters," simply means away from the Christ of the Bible to the Christ of anyone's fabrication. Destroy the record of Christ in the Bible, and there is no historic Christ. Secular history is practically silent about Jesus, which, I think, was divinely purposed, that we might have one true record, and unite on the Christ of this record.

Furthermore, whenever anyone presumes without critical and historic authority to expurgate this record of passages that do not meet his conception of Christ, and declares all such to be "spurious or traditional," the integrity of this record is broken, and the authority of Jesus is weakened; and we are left in doubt and uncertainty about everything pertaining to Christ and Christianity. At least, before we give up the Christ of the Scriptures, we had better consider well Peter's question, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" We can be sure of no other Christ.

So we come to the Bible for the Christ, whose mind is the ultimate authority in religion. But this needs further elucidation and understanding. The Bible contains the

mind of Christ, but it is not wholly the mind of Christ. Many read the Bible indiscriminately, regarding every word as the word of Christ and equally authoritative. This makes the *Bible* the standard of authority instead of *Christ*. The Bible contains the mind of many others besides Christ. It contains the mind of Moses and other inspired prophets, and it contains the mind of some who were not inspired, such as Job's friends—Saul, Ahab, Herod, Pilate and the Devil himself; but the mind of none of these is necessarily the mind of Christ. The minds of others are placed in the Bible as the background for the revelation of the mind of Christ, who alone is the Christian's standard of authority.

Where in the Bible, then, shall we find the mind of Christ, or what shall be taken as his mind? In the Old Testament it is to be found in types and symbols and laws that look forward to, and find their fulfillment in, Christ. Thus these Scriptures are "profitable," says Paul, and "were written for our admonition"; but the New Testament Scriptures contain the mind of Christ more clearly and fully revealed. Search is being made for older and more authentic records of Jesus and his teaching; and all kinds of destructive and constructive criticism of these records is being made; but they remain the best records that we have; and, until better records are discovered, the only hope of unity is to unite upon these records as the best revelation of the mind of Christ that we have. So we come to these records to learn the mind of Christ, which is final in authority for all Christians.

However, the New Testament needs to be read indiscriminately to know the mind of Jesus as therein revealed. The New Testament contains the mind of Christ, but it

is not the mind of Christ. What, then, in the New Testament is the mind of Christ?

First, the reported words express his mind. There can be no reasonable doubt that the words ascribed to Christ in the modern translations are genuine; but here we must trust modern scholarship. The recorded words of Christ are few and simple; yet they are very expressive and pregnant with the mind of Christ. "Christ was able to compress into a single sentence the experience of the whole human race," said W. J. Bryan. "The literature of the world holds no other doctrine so limited in bulk and so limitless in meaning," said Henry van Dyke. Anyone, therefore, that would know the mind of Christ must make much of the study of his words as recorded in the New Testament, because these words undoubtedly reveal his mind. However, some seem to hesitate or refuse to accept some of his words as expressive of his mind to-day, declaring them to be either spurious or an accommodation to the age, to which he spoke. For instance, his words on baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc. In such matters it is claimed that only the spirit and not the letter of his words is binding. Such an attitude toward the words of Christ is merely a veiled rejection of his authority. Those who hold such an attitude accept only those words of Christ that meet the approval of their own mind and heart, which, in fact, is their standard of authority.

Next, the deeds of Christ, recorded in the Bible, reveal his mind, or "manifest his glory." For this reason, John recorded what Jesus *did* as well as what he *said*. One's mind can be expressed in an act as truly and plainly as in words, and in some cases better. "Actions speak louder than words" at times. When for some offense my mother

quietly led me to the back porch for discipline, she often did not say a word, but she expressed her mind all right. Jesus said very little at the cleansing of the Temple, but he nevertheless made his mind very clear by what he did. He said nothing at the restoring of sight to the eyes of the beggar on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but he expressed his mind by stopping the whole procession and going aside to minister to the man, and thereby revealed his mind, that it is more important to serve than to be crowned king. Even the silences of Jesus were vocal with his truth. Thus the mind of Christ was revealed in his deeds. Whenever he was unable to express his mind in words, which were often too small vessels to contain all the truth, which he came to reveal, he embodied his mind in deeds. So anyone that would know the mind of Christ must also make much of the study of his deeds, because *a thus-did-the-Lord* is just as important and authoritative as *a thus-sayeth-the-Lord*.

There is one other revelation of the mind of Christ in the Bible. The recorded life and character of Christ reveal his mind. He did not simply speak and act God's last, best word to men; he is that word. As John states it in the prologue to his Gospel, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Again, "I am the way and the life and the truth." Incarnated life and character is the best revelation of truth for one's mind. There were many things, about which I did not have to ask either by word or deed the mind of my father and mother, because I knew their life and character. I thereby knew what they would say and do by what they were. Just so we may know the

mind of Christ from his life and character as recorded in the Bible. It would have been impossible to have fully expressed and recorded the mind of Christ in the Bible by a record of his deeds and words alone; John says that the world would hardly have contained such a voluminous book, so, to complete and perfect the revelation of the mind of Christ, his life and character was recorded in the Bible, which is perhaps the best revelation of his mind. The biographies of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John fully and completely reveal Christ's life and character, which is an embodiment and revelation of his mind. So, then, the words, the deeds and the character of Christ, taken together, fully and completely reveal the mind of Christ on everything religious. If a matter arises where neither a word nor a deed of Christ can be found to express his mind, that is, if Christ said nothing nor did nothing about it, then turn on the light from his character, which will clearly reveal his mind. Thus in the light of Christ's life and character, what he would say or do is clearly seen. The mind of Christ as revealed in the Bible in the words, deeds and character of Christ is sufficient for every religious need, and constitutes the Christian's standard of authority in religion. No higher or more perfect standard has been found, or can be conceived.

The mind of Christ, as herein revealed, has not been outgrown, nor shown to be inapplicable to any age or race of men. As Dr. Henry van Dyke has well said:

"Christ's teaching is neither ancient nor modern, neither Jewish nor Greek. It is universal, enduring, valid for all minds and for all times. There are no more difficulties in accepting it now than there were when it was delivered. It fits the spiritual needs of the nineteenth as closely as it fitted the spiritual needs of the first century. It finds the

soul as inevitably to-day as it did at first. . . . It is comprised in a little space, but it has an infinite fullness. Its utterance is closely bounded, but its significance is inexhaustible. . . . It is a clear fountain of living water, springing up into everlasting life. Calm, pure, unfathomable, it is never clouded and it never fails. The truth that flows from Jesus is constant and unvarying. The Spirit always rests upon Him. The Father is always with Him. Out of the deep serenity of His soul, as from some secret vale of peace, high among the eternal hills, the vital spring of truth wells up forever, and forever the crystal stream runs down to refresh and revive the souls of men."

Where the satisfaction of all the soul's desires is found, must be the final authority for man.

The finality of Jesus is that of a final appeal,—the appeal of the highest and best. His authority is, therefore, not legalistic and imperious, but idealistic and inspiring. It is the authority of the ideal, which must continue final for all ages and races of men. For this reason, "His commands are not grievous," as John states, but are the ways of life and happiness. "The Scribes and Pharisees, who sat on Moses' seat," as Christ showed, "bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger." To all such Christ appeals: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Christ is final, because he is able thus to satisfy the souls of men, and give the highest peace and happiness. He endeavors to make life a delight and service and worship a joy. However, he does not seek to eliminate the crosses of life; but all his crosses lead to life and joy. According to Jesus, the greatest command and the one that includes

all others, is love,—love for God and man. Nothing higher, better or beyond love can be conceived. No higher, better conception of man or no truer, sweeter conception of God will ever be known than that revealed in and by Jesus in the Gospels. Goethe has truly said, “We will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture, as it glistens and shines forth in the Gospels”; or, as Renan states it: “Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus.”

“O Saul, it shall be

A face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by forever; a hand like
this hand

See the Christ stand.”

—BROWNING.

The finality of the verbal form or mental statement of the mind of Christ remains to be considered. The Modernist School contends that only truth abides, which is to be found in “the abiding experiences” or “religious values”; but the mental expression and framework, the thought-forms, change. Mental categories come and go with the age that framed them; but the abiding experiences, which the categories sought to express, remain. This is the theme of Doctor Fosdick’s book, *The Modern Use of the Bible*, which is undoubtedly true of much of the religious teaching of the past, including some things in the Bible; but is it true of Christ’s statement and thought-forms as expressed in the Bible? It is doubtful whether anything

that Christ said is, strictly speaking, in categorical form, but he does state many truths in positive terms. He gives the norms of truth rather than categories. His teaching has been made the source of innumerable categorical deductions in the form of creeds and systems of doctrine, which change with the ages; but Christ's teaching abides as it was from the beginning. Modernists have much to say about "transient mental frameworks and categorical thought-forms"; but they fail to point out such in the teaching of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount and every other statement of Christ stands in the form in which he gave them, and no one has been able to improve on his statements; so there must be some finality even in the form of Christ's statements.

Radical Modernists declare some of the teachings of Jesus, which conflict with modern philosophy, such as demonology, angelology, miracles, second advent, etc., to be spurious; but this is a question for textual critics to determine, and they have not so decided. Or, "if not spurious, then transient," they say; however, "Not one scintilla of evidence has been found to invalidate the historic integrity of a single paragraph of the Gospels as they appear in our Revised Version of the New Testament," says Dr. Charles E. Jefferson. The teaching of Christ has often before conflicted with prevailing philosophy, which was afterwards found to be false; and who knows but what the same may happen again? Already in modern science there is an indication of the proof of the Supernatural, which lies at the foundation of Christ's teaching on the above, and which is rejected by radical Modernists. Besides, the demand that everything historical be verified by human reason and experience to-day is to say that God

has never done anything except what he is doing to-day and in the same way, which is itself unreasonable and contrary to facts. We live in an *orderly* world, but that does not mean that we do not live in a *changing* world.

As to the interpretation and application of the mind of Christ as revealed in the Bible, there must be the broadest individual liberty consistent with his revealed mind; but this does not reopen the question of authority, and make it possible to dethrone Jesus from the seat of final authority. As long as the interpretation and application seek to know and do the mind of Christ as revealed in the Bible, there is no rejection of Christ's authority. There is a destructive interpretation of the mind of Christ by spiritualizing everything that he said and did; but this is forbidden by all sound exegesis.

In case one is not able to interpret the mind of Jesus in harmony with his reason and experience, let him do as Peter did, hold to Christ as final in authority, saying, "Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and know thou art the Holy One of God," and seek for further light on the difficult words. With this conviction one will thus hold for further light the words and deeds of Christ, which he does not fully understand, or which do not appeal to his own mind; and if one does this, that is, "If any man willeth to do his will," he is assured by Christ, "he shall know the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." Jesus does not demand an arbitrary acceptance of his teaching; but he assures every man, if he wills to do God's will, that he will find his teaching to be true. This passage, instead of enthroning human reason and experience as ultimate in authority, as it is interpreted by Modernists, declares for the ulti-

mate acceptance of Jesus as the final authority. There is very little if anything in the teaching of Jesus that does not appeal to the highest and best in man; but, in case anyone is not able to so interpret some of his teaching, even this will be finally found to be true, if it is held in reservation, and further light on the same is sought. It is foolish and puerile to reject that which we do not fully understand, or are unable to interpret in harmony with our own mind. We would not so treat the statements of any great man such as Solomon, Shakespeare, etc.; yet this seems to be the modern attitude toward some of Christ's teaching. "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

Furthermore, some to-day doubt the truth and permanency of the teaching of the Apostles; and Paul and others are accused of becoming theologians and perverting and departing from the original Gospel, or the mind of Christ. But, as Dr. George W. Richards, president of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, says, "In the effort for church union we must go back to the teachings of the Apostles that we may go forward to the ideals of the Christ." Paul never claimed authority only as he spoke the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 7:6, 26, 40). He was a theologian in the sense that he elaborated and developed the teaching of Christ; but it remains to be shown that anything that he taught was contrary to the teaching of Christ. His themes were the fundamentals of Christ; and his sole purpose was to "preach Christ and him crucified." It is claimed, however, that he diverted Christianity from

the emphasis and practice of the social Gospel of Christ as embodied in "the kingdom of heaven" on earth, that is, a better world order; but, whenever those making this charge tramp all over this country raising funds for the poor, as did Paul, and labor with their white hands that have never lifted anything heavier than a book that they may not be a social burden to anyone, as Paul did, then they may more consistently make this charge. Paul did teach a theological system; but the theology which he taught was given as the theological background for Christian life and works. James said that faith without works is dead, and the reverse is also true, works without faith is dead. Without a strong theological faith back of works there can be little or no Christian life and works. This is both scripturally and psychologically true.

Finally, with individual liberty in the interpretation and application of the mind of Christ as revealed in the Bible, can there be any unity of interpretation and application, or at least enough unity to insure Christian unity? Is not the Pope or the church needed here to interpret and apply the mind of Christ? No. One of the wonders of Christ's teaching is its clearness and oneness of meaning. When the full light from both his words, deeds and character is turned upon any religious matter, there is little room left for differences, or at least there will be sufficient unity to insure Christian unity; which has to do only with the great fundamentals of Christianity. Christian unity does not mean uniformity in thought and act, even about the mind of Christ; but it is the unity of those that are for Christ, that is, for him as the final authority in religion. James and John thought that it meant uniformity in fellowship and work, but Jesus rejected such


a conception of Christian unity, and showed that it is the unity of all those that are "for him," and show that they "believe in him" by doing any "good work in his name" (Mark 9:38-42). If uniformity in fellowship and work is not essential to Christian unity, much less is uniformity in interpretation of his mind essential, because this would exalt intellectual correctness above Christian purpose and work. But there is hope for the unity of those that accept Christ's mind as revealed in the Bible as final in religion, and seek for unity upon the great fundamentals therein contained and revealed. As it appears to-day, neither Catholicism, Protestantism nor Modernism is the final form of Christianity; yet there is much in each that needs to be conserved in the Christianity of the future, which will be made the foundation for Christian unity. As stated by Dr. George W. Richards:

"Union must come with a new conception of Christianity—not a new Christianity, but a new interpretation of Christianity. Divided Christendom is the logical outcome of a distinctive view of Christianity which underlies both Catholicism and Protestantism. . . . There is, however, another conception of Christianity which is gradually pervading the churches. According to this view Christianity is a life before it is a doctrine and an institution. The life is begotten in the soul of man by the spirit of God proceeding from Christ and Him glorified. It manifests itself in a new attitude and disposition toward the ultimate realities of human life—in a new faith, a new hope, and a new love. The source of life is Jesus Christ, the creative power is his Spirit, and the seat of life is the soul of man. Thus men become new creatures, new in their motives and in their purpose. They live in the faith and hope of a Christlike God."

When Jesus is thus accepted by all as the ultimate word and will of God to man, and all come into this new life in Him, there will be Christian unity.

CHAPTER IV

HIS SON

HE third essential of Christianity according to the text is "His Son," in whom "God has spoken unto us." In the preceding chapter, the fact of God's having spoken to man and where His word is found, which is the question of authority in religion, has been considered, and located "in His Son," who is, therefore, the vital truth of Christianity. Christianity takes its very name and being from Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is its distinguishing truth. He alone makes a thing Christian, and without him nothing can be Christian. Christianity without Christ would be like staging *Hamlet* without Hamlet,—an empty farce. Some try to ascribe Christianity to Paul, which is preposterous. Paul's only purpose and hope was to realize Jesus Christ in his own life and to be found in him; and to this end he lived and died. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both the founder and foundation of Christianity.

But, strange to say, the subject of Jesus Christ and his Sonship was not treated at the Lausanne Conference. He was recognized as the invisible head of the Conference and the whole church; but no time and place on the program were given for a study and exchange of views on this most important subject. Because of Christ's importance his essentiality is sometimes taken for granted, as it doubtless was at Lausanne, which may be done, provided

there are no vital differences on the subject. But can this be said to be true?

It seems that there would be no differences over a matter so vital to Christianity as Christ, but such is not the case. All accept Jesus as the Christ in one form or another, but differ over many things pertaining to him. These differences have grown largely out of the various answers to the question, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" This has been a vital question from the beginning, discussed by both the friends and enemies of Jesus, and has been a fertile cause of division in the church. It is the one inescapable question of life. It must be answered in one form or another; but the answers differ widely, and mark the lines between believers and unbelievers. There is but one real Christian heresy,—the rejection of Jesus, which is determined by one's answer to the above question, "What think ye of Christ?"

There has been so much said and written about the personality of Jesus that we hesitate to enter such a contested territory with a plea for unity. It has been the battle ground of the centuries; yet such a vital question cannot be ignored in a discussion of the problem of Christian unity. No new answer can be given, or hardly a new thing said in answer to this question. The grounds both *pro* and *con* have been fully covered by the discussions of the past and present. All that will be attempted in this chapter will be a brief review of these views and conceptions of Christ, hoping to find common ground for Christian unity and believing that the personality of Jesus is broad enough to hold all his disciples.

The different views of Jesus may be divided into two general classes; namely, those that accept and those that

deny him as historic. The former account for him as a myth or a religious ideal. Some say a mythical god, perhaps the Palestinian sun god, Joshua, who was humanized under the name Jesus, others say a human being that was deified after his death; and others less radical undertake to show that Jesus was part myth and part fact. All such views have been refuted by apologists for the historicity of Jesus; consequently there are few to-day who do not believe in him as a true historical character. Even the Jews to-day, who have been the most skeptical, accept him as historic; and many of them, as is shown by Rabbi Wise's recent statement, accept him as a great religious teacher. Jesus is central and vital to Christianity; and, if he be without historic fact of his existence, then Christianity is without historic foundation, and stands or falls on its own merits as a system of religion. While Christianity can be easily shown to be superior in this respect, yet it is much more than a religious system. It is a life that grows out of the life of Jesus, the power and influence of which would be largely lost, if Jesus did not really live. However, some apologists for Christianity, as Doctor MacIntosh, of Yale, undertake to show that the claims of Christianity are independent of all historical facts:

“There is an important tactical advantage in showing how extensive and vital is that content or essence of Christianity which can be defended successfully without any assumption as to particular facts of history. We escape the danger of affecting the entire content of essential Christian belief with the necessary certitude of historical opinion. All that has been said of the reasonableness and truth of Christianity is demonstrably valid, whether we have any Christology or not, and whatever we may or may not believe about the historic Jesus. It would still be valid if it should

turn out that Jesus was essentially different from what has been commonly believed, or even that he was not truly historical at all."

Whether or not this new apologetics can be sustained lies beyond the scope of this book. However that may be, Jesus is almost universally accepted to be historical; and we proceed upon this hypothesis without further notice of these views.

The other class of views, which regard Jesus as historic, and which are more or less orthodox, may be divided into many subclasses. It is confusing to undertake to follow these various views in all their windings and wanderings of divergent theories. Some of these differ much, and some differ little,—so little, in fact, that it is difficult for an outsider to distinguish them; yet the church has divided over such differences. We shall not enter this philosophic and theological labyrinth of Christologies further than a mere mention of these various views as the historical background for this chapter. The discussion of the nature and being of Jesus began in the first century of the church, and has continued down to the present; but little has been added by modern minds to the old views.

Broadly speaking, there are two general historic views of Jesus, the *humanitarian* and the *divine*; that is, those that regard Jesus as a mere man with no existence previous to his birth of Mary, and those that regard him as divine or both human and divine, with many subdivisions under these two general views, which were differentiated by different emphases placed upon his humanity and divinity. The humanitarians were known as Monarchians, and were subdivided into Ebionites, Arians, Neoplatonists, Socinians, Sabbelians, etc., from whom have come the different

branches of the Unitarians. They opposed all division of the Godhead, and held that Jesus was highest of the created beings but not divine, like God but not God, like nature but not the same nature,—a difference that was expressed by one letter in the original word, yet a real and important difference. They held that Jesus was a God-filled man, who had achieved unity with God, but all men were capable of the same if not an equal attainment. The Deists opposed all these humanitarian views of Jesus, which finally led to the adoption of the Nicene Creed, which became the orthodox view of the church.

However, there were several subdivisions of the Deists, who held that Jesus was both human and divine with varying differences according to the emphasis placed upon his humanity and divinity and the explanation and relationship of each. There were the Docetæ, who held that his human body was only an appearance; the Apollinarians, who held that he had a human body but no human soul; the Nestorians, who held that Jesus had but one nature, the human being taken up into the divine; and the Atiochians and the Eutychemians, who held to the dual nature of Jesus. These controversies finally led to the Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D., which adopted the Chalcedonian Creed. Also at a later date there arose the Kenosis theory, taken from Phil. 3:1-11, which is the doctrine of Christ's complete abandon of divinity for humanity. The above various views of the Deists are still held in the church to-day in one form or another, which greatly complicates and makes difficult the problem of Christian unity.

In view of the above many and widely differing views of Jesus, it would be folly to enter the philosophic and

theological mazes of these Christologies with a view of trying to harmonize the same or to find common ground for unity. While these controversies have done much to clear the way for a simpler and truer Christology, there is much that needs to be forgotten, that we may know the real true Christ of God, and unite upon him. With respect to the past there are several negative things that need to be said and done. First, there is no hope of union on any of the formularies of the past such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Creed, etc., which have witnessed to and safeguarded the faith in the past, and which some to-day insist upon as the basis of unity. Not that they are not largely true, but they are not the mental forms that appeal to modern minds. Besides, most Christians insist upon their individual right to do their own thinking and stating their faith about Jesus, and could never be brought to subscribe to these statements. Second, no Christology can explain all the mysteries of the Incarnation. Any attempt to do so only leads to confusion and mysticism, as is shown by the controversies of the past. The Incarnation is a vital essential of Christianity, but it involves mysteries, which, with the light we have, cannot be fully solved. According to Paul, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up into glory." These are some of the mysteries which Paul did not attempt to explain fully, and it would be the height of folly for anyone else to presume to do so. They may be profitable for individual study and contemplation, but not for Christian unity. In fact, all views on the above are more or less

speculative, and must be left in the realm of private opinion. Yet, if we are to have Christian unity, some common, simple and true Christology must be found as the basis for unity.

A Christology for Christian unity involves many difficulties. This chapter is a tentative effort to solve some of these difficulties, and is not intended as a dogmatic treatise of the subject. The Christology that is nearest to the real Christ of God is the ideal which all seek; but the delineation of this ideal is a difficult matter. The Christ of God must be determined largely in the same way that the word of God is determined, which, as we showed in the preceding chapter, is by "the mind of Christ," as revealed in the words, deeds and character of Christ, recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. Just so, the truest and best Christology is Christ's own conception of himself as expressed in the Gospels, whatever that may be. Some, however, regard these records of Christ as traditional and giving merely the prevailing views of Jesus at that time. But these records of Christ were written by the contemporaries of Jesus, and can be traced to within thirty to sixty years of his death; and, if Christ expressed any views of himself, they would have been known by these writers, and embodied in their records of his life and teaching; or, at least, their view of him would be most likely to be nearest to Christ's own view of himself, or the real Christ of God, who lived and taught in Galilee and Judea. Some are searching for earlier records than those of the New Testament, but so far this search has been in vain, and the Gospels remain the best records that we have. If we cannot trust these records as approximately true and authentic, then we have no sure

way of knowing anything about Jesus; and all views of him are mere fabrications of the imagination. So we come to these records as the best account of Christ that we have to learn his true nature and being, as the foundation for Christian unity. It is claimed, however, that the first Christians had unity without these records, which were not then written, and why can we not do the same? But the first Christians had instead the immediate presence or vivid memory of Jesus in person, which gave them a common Christology on which to unite; and, when the memory of Jesus began to fade, many took it in hand to record these early views and impressions of Christ, that future generations might know the same Christ (see Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1, etc.); and these records which have been preserved and authenticated reveal the only Christ that we know. To accept a part of this New Testament record as true history and part as tradition and interpretation destroys the integrity and credibility of it as a whole. Spurious and interpolated passages must be determined by textual and critical principles and not by whether or not the passage is according to one's conception of Christ. Whether one agrees with the New Testament conception of Christ or not, it is the view of the one who wrote it, and it stands as an authentic and integral part of the whole until it is shown otherwise.

But it is claimed that Christ reveals himself to every generation in a new and progressive revelation of himself. But what new and added revelation of Jesus has been given by any age since the writing of the New Testament that is not contained in the Gospels? There have been new interpretations of these records, but not a single new fact about Christ has been added. There are the Apoc-

ryphal Gospels of Christ, which have been discredited, and which no one believes to-day, so we are shut up for the most part in our quest for the true knowledge of Jesus to the New Testament records. There have been many views contrary to these records held in the past, but these have all been shown to be false; and who knows but that the same may be shown of all contrary views to-day. The only views of Christ that have continued, and are held by Christians to-day, are the simple views of him revealed in the New Testament. The Gospels do not contain any elaborate Christology such as was afterwards formulated and advocated by the church; yet they clearly reveal Christ in essential outline. They contain little or nothing that could be called categorical statements on the person of Jesus; but they tell a plain, simple story of his life and teaching; in fact, just such an account as would be expected, if Jesus was as he is herein revealed. They do not give the same facts, but they reveal the same Christ. There are minor differences accounted for by differences in background and those addressed; but taken all together they give a consistent true account of Jesus, whom all the world to-day is interested in knowing. So we come to these records, desiring, as the Greeks of old, to see Jesus, and confidently believing that they contain an approximately true portrayal of him.

This does not mean, as some claim, that we have an *embalmed* Christ in the New Testament, preserved and laid away as a relic of other days. No one can read these records, and have such a view. They are as living and vital to-day as the day they were written, and Jesus is as much a living personality in the world to-day as he was when he dwelt in visible presence among men. He was

revealed to John after his resurrection as "the first and the last, and the Living one. I was dead, and, behold, I am alive forever more"; and he is seen in the midst of the churches, dictating messages to the messengers of these churches. John in his Gospel reveals Jesus as he was on earth in the days of his flesh, and in his Revelation he reveals him as he is to-day and shall ever be. Revelation begins where the Gospels leave off with the resurrection, and ends in the eternal home of the soul with God and Christ forever. Throughout the whole New Testament Jesus is a living personality for all ages and races. There is no being and influence so evident and supreme in history and life to-day as Jesus; and he increases in meaning and influence with the ages.

Besides, there are but four ways of transmitting truth to succeeding generations; namely, tradition, divine revelation, reincarnation and written records. The first, tradition, is known to be unreliable; and, if anyone claims the second, divine revelation, as many have done, let him give his credentials. As to the third, reincarnation, this is true, and has helped to reveal Christ all down the ages by his reincarnation in his true followers and in the church as a whole; however, this revelation of him is subject to the Christ of the Gospels. No one would accept a Christ thus revealed contrary to the Christ of the Gospels. The revelation of Christ by reincarnation has only been in corroboration of the New Testament revelation of him, which after all is the same revelation. This leaves the written records of the New Testament as our most reliable source of knowing Jesus. These records may be found to contain minor errors, but they are the best that we have, and they are the best authenticated records of all ancient

history. So we come to these records of Jesus with full assurance of seeing and knowing the true Christ of God, who lived, and loved, taught and wrought, died and arose from the dead, and has ever since been the living dominant personality of all ages and races. The Christ of these records, therefore, is proposed as the foundation for Christian unity.

No further apology for the Christ of the Gospels will be undertaken in this chapter. This field has been fully and ably covered by the apologists of the past and present. This chapter seeks only to see and know Jesus as he is portrayed in these records. Furthermore, no elaborate exposition of the Christ of the New Testament will be attempted, which would doubtless be only another Christology, of which the world is too full already, and, therefore, a hindrance to unity instead of a help. Only the plain essential traits of the Christ of the Gospels will be mentioned with the minimum of interpretation. Christ cannot, however, be didactically portrayed without more or less of interpretation, but the interpretation aimed at will be the interpretation that Christ placed upon himself, or that which the inspired writers gave of him. This is not such an easy task as it first appears or as some modern dogmatists claim. People speak of the Christ of the Gospels as being well known, which, broadly speaking, is true, but often it will be found that they mean the Christ of their own understanding and interpretation is well known. To understand and comprehend Jesus just as he was on earth and is portrayed in the New Testament, calls for the deepest thought and the truest information of all that entered into this revelation, which few possess. First, there is the social and religious background of this

revelation, which is necessary to the full understanding of the same. Furthermore, the terms used in this revelation are not modern words, but are religious and philosophic terms of that age with certain religious and philosophic implications and connotations, which are difficult to know to-day. Jesus and the writers of the New Testament made use of the words of that age, which were often inadequate for the meaning they sought to convey, so a new or added meaning had to be poured into the words. These New Testament words have continued to gather meaning through the centuries, which makes it difficult often to get back to the idea expressed by Jesus and his biographers. Modern translations have done much to help in this respect; but even with these excellent helps it is hard to see and know Jesus as he really was, or as he was conceived by his New Testament biographers. Even his biographers give different interpretations of him, or at least they reveal different phases of his being. They reveal the same Christ, but do not express him in the same terms.

To Matthew Jesus was the Messiah; to Mark he was the mighty Son of God; to Luke he was the great physician of the soul and the Saviour of men; to John he was the divine Logos; and to Paul he was the Lord and Master. To all of them Jesus was a towering personality, whom they were unable to express fully in words; but using the best terms at their disposal, which were often inadequate for the Christian idea, one endeavored to express and reveal one idea and phase of Jesus, and another, another idea and phase; and our problem to-day is to translate these ideas into modern thought-forms. It must be borne in mind that many of these terms that they used do not

mean to-day what they meant in that day. They have lost many of their original implications and connotations, and have gathered new meaning through the ages. For instance, the word, Christ or Messiah, which is a Jewish term that had a very limited and specific meaning in that day, has absorbed all the above ideas of Messiah, Son of God, Saviour, divine Logos, Lord and Master, etc., has come to stand for the whole personality of Jesus, and has become a part of his title. The same is true more or less of all the words of the Gospels. Translating the mental categories of the first century into the thought-forms of to-day is, therefore, not such an easy task. Each one, in a measure, must do this for himself. In fact, this is what each person does do. The average reader of the New Testament does not stop to inquire what a New Testament word meant in New Testament times, but interprets it in the light of its meaning to-day. The writers of the New Testament used the loftiest terms that they had to express Jesus, and we must do the same. Jesus is the alluring study of the ages. The first Christians were unable to fathom the depths of his being and express the same fully, nor are we able to do so. "Thou art abreast of all the centuries, nay, Thou goest before them like the star, I have never come up with Thee, modern as I am," said George Matheson. If we have discovered any new ideas of spiritual greatness, Jesus is these truths also, if they be truths, because "God has summed up all things in him"; and we shall never be able to know and express him fully. He is bigger than any verbal expression of him.

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

He cannot be put into systems or mental categories; but all can seek to know this real Christ of God, whom the writers of the New Testament endeavored to reveal, and unite upon him. To this end we come to the Gospels, which reveal Jesus first as:

The Son of Man

For twenty-five or more years of his life no one, except those to whom special revelation about him had been given, had any idea that he was anything more than a man. He was known as the eldest in Joseph's and Mary's family, whose home was in Nazareth,—a small and insignificant village of Galilee. According to the New Testament records, there was little or nothing in his early life to distinguish him from other human beings. The Apocryphal Gospels ascribe marvels to him in his childhood and young manhood, but there is no faith to be put in these records. Luke says that "he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man," which is a normal human life. That he was a real man there can be no doubt according to the New Testament. He called himself "the son of man," and was known as "the man of Galilee."

Furthermore, his humanity was real. He was subject to all the appetites, infirmities and temptations of the flesh and spirit (Matt. 4:1-11; John 4:6; Heb. 4:15, etc.). He hungered and ate, became tired and slept, sorrowed and rejoiced, and in every way experienced a normal human life. When some in the church began to loose their hold on his humanity through emphasis of his divinity, the church fought for his real humanity, and put out of the church all those who seemed to doubt his humanity,—

those who said that his human body was only an appearance, or that he had a human body but no human soul. Finally, however, the church did loose its hold on his humanity, which led to the worship of the humanity in Mary, "the mother of God," as she was called; but such has no justification in the New Testament. John says that the divine Logos became flesh, and anything short of real humanity does not convey John's meaning. He was flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, mind of our mind, and heart of our heart. He engaged in human work, and experienced human pleasures and hardships the same as other human beings. Before his public ministry he was a carpenter, and he participated in the social human pleasures of his day. (John 2:1-12; Luke 2:40-52.)

His public or professional work was that of prophet, priest and king. As teacher he gave a new and perfected ethical and moral code, which he embodied in his life and teaching (Matt. 5-7, etc.). As priest he established a new and perfect system of worship (John 4:1-42; Matt. 6:1-18; 15:1-20; 23:1-39; Letter to Hebrews; etc.). As king he established and ruled over the "kingdom of heaven" on earth,—a new and perfect social order for this world and the world to come. The kingdom ideal was prominent in all his teaching and work, and some think was the center and heart of his Gospel. He taught and worked for the kingdom of God both on earth and in heaven, and commanded his disciples to go and preach and work to the same end. (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20.) In all the above functions or relationships, namely, as prophet, priest and king, Jesus is supreme; and Christian unity can be realized only through loyalty on the part of all to him as such. The supremacy of Jesus in these

essential functions is a vital principle for Christian unity, and needs to be emphasized and practiced by all Christians to this end. Some moralists emphasize his ethical code to the neglect of his worship and kingdom; others, ritualists, emphasize his worship to the neglect of his ethics and kingdom; and still others, socialists, emphasize his kingdom to the neglect of the other two; all of which is only partial loyalty to Jesus. Christian unity is realized by loyalty to Jesus as both prophet, priest and king and by an equal emphasis and practice of Christ's ethics, worship and kingdom.

Finally, he lived not only a normal human life, but he died a natural human death, dying on the cross even before the other two, who were crucified with him. His life and death were not different from other human lives and deaths in *kind*, but far different in *quality*. He lived the *perfect* human life and died the *most heroic* death. "He was tempted in all points as we, yet *without sin*"; and by his death he conquered even those that put him to death, and redeemed a lost race. His life and character are the embodiment of perfect humanity, the ideal man,—what man may become. He is the ideal man for all ages and races. He is so portrayed not only in the New Testament Scriptures, but also in the literature of the world. All Christians to-day, and you might say the world also, are united on the perfect humanity of Jesus, which is a far step toward Christian unity. Next, he is revealed as:

The Son of God

To stop with Jesus as "the son of man," the perfect man, as some do, would be to omit one half of the Christ of the Gospels. He is not only "the son of man," but

he is also "the Son of God." (Matt. 3:17; 17:16; Luke 1:26-37; John 1:1-14, 49; 5:22-23; 10:30-33; 11:27; 14:8-9; 20:28-31; Rom. 1:4; Col. 1:16-17; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 1:2-3, etc.) The New Testament abounds in statements of Christ's divinity, some of which are attributed to God and to Jesus himself, who claimed to be the Son of God, and often heard himself so confessed without any denial on his part. This view of Jesus was not the first impression with Christ's disciples, but an acquired conviction. Some, as Mary and Simeon, were early convinced of his divinity; and others, as Thomas and Paul, after much doubt and indisputable proof. The first disciples knew him to be human, and were led to believe him to be divine, because they were unable to account for him on any other hypothesis. The first Gnostics and heretics, as Apollinaris, asserted Christ's deity, but denied his humanity, which was the great heresy of that day; but the great heresy of to-day is the rejection of Christ's divinity. This is due to the fact that modern apologists for Christ start with the certainty of his divinity, and believe him human in whatever sense he can be, being divine; while the first disciples started with the certainty of his humanity, and believed him divine in whatever sense he could be, being human. The latter approach to the person of Jesus is the true rational approach; and Christian apologists to-day need to return to this approach outlined in the Gospels. By approaching the divinity of Jesus through his humanity, as did the first disciples, a decided tactical advantage is gained, and clearer and truer understanding of the Christ of the Gospels is obtained. His humanity is sufficient to convince one of his divinity. As W. J. Lhamon in his book, *The Character of*

Christ, clearly and convincingly shows that the sinlessness, the universality, the masterliness, the authority, the severity, the forgiveness, the love, the consistency and harmony of Christ's life and character are sufficient to convince anyone of his divinity.

It is comparatively easy to believe in Christ's divinity, but it is difficult to explain the same. While all Christians accept his divinity in one form or another, they differ widely over the nature and extent of the same; they have different theories and explanations, which have often led to divisions. We are not herein concerned about these discussions, all of which have been more or less divisive, but are interested only in knowing what is the New Testament conception of Christ's divinity, believing the Christology of the Gospels to be the only possible basis of unity. Neither Christ nor anyone that speaks in the New Testament gives any elaborate theory and explanation of his divinity. His divinity is simply stated as a fact with little theorizing or philosophizing about it. Many of the philosophic and theological questions discussed in the Christologies of later ages are not even mentioned or implied in the New Testament.

The New Testament conception of Christ's divinity is briefly stated in the Apostolic confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," which appears often in the Gospels. While it is brief it is nevertheless clear and definite. Note the repetition of the definite article, *the* Christ, *the* Son of *the* God, which expresses uniqueness in each case. Christ is *the*, not *a*, Son of God. The uniqueness of Christ's divinity is furthermore expressed in the New Testament by such terms as "conceived and born of a virgin," "the only begotten Son," "the divine Logos,"

“the effulgence of God’s glory and the very image of His substance and upholding all things by the word of His Power,” “equality with God,” “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” etc. To what extent these terms express the prevailing religious philosophy of that day is hard to say; but at least the divinity of Christ is superhuman. The above expressions are clearly against the Unitarian view of Christ’s divinity, that Jesus is divine in the same sense that all men are divine, only differing in degree, or that God is capable of entering into every man as He did into Jesus; that is to say, divinity is a human achievement. This is true in a sense according to Paul (Eph. 3:19); but at the same time all writers of the New Testament draw a clear distinction between the divinity of Christ and other men.

As to the many speculative theories about the preëxistence of Christ, the nature and degree of his divinity, the difference between Deity and divinity, etc., the New Testament has little or nothing to say. The Incarnation is a fact to be accepted more than to be philosophized about. It cannot be fully explained according to Paul. “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.” A religion without mysteries, the supernatural, is not the religion of the Gospels. Both Jesus and his Apostles recognized the supernatural in religion, but they did not dogmatize about it, especially about the Incarnation or any other great mystery. There must be the largest individual liberty of view about all such speculative questions; and the only hope of unity on the Incarnation is the simple statement of the Gospels.

Some object to the New Testament theory of the Incarnation on the grounds of the virgin conception and birth of Jesus. Call it tradition, if you will; but what better explanation of the process of making God human has been offered? Some object to it, because it is supernatural; but Christ himself is supernatural, and must have a supernatural origin. Others reject it, because they cannot understand it; but what more do they understand about their own natural conception? One is as great a mystery as the other. Because a thing happens every day does not explain it; and besides there is not a scientist in the world that can explain fully the genesis of *human* life and much less *divine* life. If we are not able to explain natural human conception, how can we be expected to explain divine conception? We accept both on faith.

Others reject the Christ of the Gospels because of the miracles attributed to him; but, if there is nothing true in Jesus except what can be verified to-day in human experience, then he was nothing more than a human being. If he was truly God in the flesh, then he was able to do the things attributed to him. Faith in the miraculous simply means faith in the presence, the activity and providence of God. If Jesus was really Immanuel, God with us, then to be consistent he must have done the things attributed to him. But it is claimed that the miracle is not God's way of doing things to-day, nor ever has been. To assert thus that God has never done anything except in the way that He is doing things to-day is unreasonable. Besides, scientists are talking to-day about the supernatural in nature, higher laws that they know not of; and, if this is true in nature, much more is it true in spirit. Furthermore, if you reject the miracles of Christ, you are

still confronted with the greatest miracle of all, Jesus himself, who is the moral miracle of all history. The only reasonable way to account for Jesus is, he was a miracle himself, and wrought mighty works and wonders beyond the natural.

The supernatural in Christ reached its peak in his resurrection from the dead, his crowning victory over the material, which is one of the best authenticated facts of history, and proves his divinity. There has been much discussion and speculation about the form of his resurrection, which has often been divisive. It is not the explanation or anyone's theory, but the fact of the resurrection that is essential to Christianity, and upon this all can unite.

In conclusion, the best accounting for Jesus that has yet been given is the Christ of the Gospels, who is portrayed as both human and divine; and there is a return to-day on the part of most Christians to this simple Christology, which means much for Christian unity. That Jesus was both human and divine is so generally believed to-day that there are few, like Strauss, who try to explain the Incarnation as a myth, a human being deified after death, or, as explained by Drews, a mythical god humanized. That he was a fanatic or a paranoiac is also entirely untenable. The only reasonable explanation of Jesus that can be given is the Christ of the Gospels, which give a plain and simple Christology, upon which all can unite.

Being both human and divine, Jesus is a revelation of both God and man. He is both the human and the divine, blended into one perfect and harmonious personality. If you wish to see man in his ideal form, see Jesus; and, if you wish to see God in his truest form, look upon Jesus.

This is why the Greeks came requesting, "Sir, we would see Jesus." We are not permitted to see him in person as they were; but we can see him no less truly and more fully in the Gospels, because he could not be fully revealed in one brief conversation. When Thomas saw him in person, he confessed, "My Lord and my God"; but more "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." All have ample assurances and proofs of both his humanity and his divinity.

There are, therefore, just two kinds of infidels and heretics, those that reject his humanity and those that reject his divinity. The first disciples, whose faith is expressed in the Gospels, accepted both without any elaborate philosophic Christology. They *knew* him to be human, and came to *believe* him to be divine, because they could not account for him in any other way, and the same is true to-day. Trouble has arisen over an over-emphasis or a rejection of either his humanity or his divinity. That he was really man and really God, the human life of God, is Christian faith according to the Gospels; and without speculation and theorizing upon the same all can unite upon this simple reasonable faith.

In recent years there has been a pronounced return to the Christology of the Gospels. The views of Strauss and Channing seem to be losing their hold on modern thinking, and there is a general acceptance of the Christ of the Gospels. Even Fundamentalists and Modernists largely agree on the person of Christ, as is seen in the following quotations from leaders among both.

"Jesus is both God and man. . . . There is no doubt about the humanity of Jesus. He was a true man."

—PATTON, of Princeton, Fundamentalist.

"Jesus was essentially the forthgoing of God himself into his world. . . . Through him God had crossed the chasm that divides divinity from man, and, taking flesh, dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; in his face we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; he is the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of his substance; in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,—this is an essential part of the New Testament. He who does not proclaim it is not preaching the New Testament; he has parted company not only with the church's theology but with the experience of God in Christ which belongs to the very center of original Christianity. For in whatever philosophic terms you may phrase it, the form of Christian experience in the New Testament was to find in Christ, not simply the ideal life, but the incarnate God of the world where that ideal life must be wrought out. . . . Jesus was man, and must be God in what sense he can be God, being assuredly man."—FOSDICK, Modernist.

That all types of modern thinkers are coming to the same conclusions about Jesus means much for the cause of Christian unity.

Nothing further needs to be said as to who and what Jesus is, that is, on the nature of his being; but we need to consider the essential content of his person as revealed in the New Testament. According to this revelation there are two essentials of Christ, his spirit and his truth, with respect to those who accept and follow him. (Rom. 8:9; John 14:6.) To reject either is to reject Christ. He is a distinct personality with a spirit all his own, which all his followers must possess and manifest; and he is the embodiment of the truth, which is the way of life to all, which cannot be rejected without rejecting him. His spirit is the highest in character that we know anything about; and his truth is the truest and most sublime doctrine that has ever been revealed to man. Both his spirit

and his truth, as revealed in the New Testament, are essentials of Christian unity.

Unfortunately, some advocates of Christian unity emphasize one of these essentials, and others the other. Accordingly, some teach that Christian unity is spiritual, and is with those that have the spirit of Christ, so they have little or nothing to say about the truth of Christ. Others teach that Christian unity is doctrinal, and is with those that have the truth of Christ, so they have little or nothing to say about the spirit of Christ. Both parties believe in a way in both the spirit and the truth of Christ, but they emphasize only one of these in their teaching and work in behalf of Christian unity. One claims the spirit of Christ, and disclaims the letter; while the other claims the literal truth of Christ, and speaks lightly of the spirit, as if there were a conflict or inconsistency between the spirit and the truth of Christ. It is absurd to think that Christ taught or commanded anything contrary to his spirit. His truth is but the expression of his spirit, so there can be no conflict, but a beautiful harmony between the two. The spirit of Christ, and especially its place in Christian unity, cannot be overemphasized; but this does not in any way exclude or discredit the truth of Christ as a factor in Christian unity. The truth and the spirit of Christ are so vitally and beautifully blended and harmonized in the Christ of the New Testament that you cannot accept and advocate the one without the other; and Christian unity requires an equal advocacy and practice of both. Let all, therefore, who accept the Christ of the New Testament accept both his spirit and truth as therein revealed, and unite upon this Christ, who has the purest Spirit and the highest truth.

The Messiah or Saviour

This Christ, who is both human and divine, and whose spirit and truth are ideal, is well qualified to be the world's Messiah,—the mediator between God and man. But, as Luther has said: "Christ is not called Christ because he has two natures. What does that signify to me? He bears the glorious and consoling name because of the office and work he has undertaken." He established his claim for world Messiahship not only by what he is, but by what he has done for man. Being both human and divine, he is capable of rendering a practical service to man in all the relationships of life as prophet, priest, king and saviour, which he has done, and thereby established his Messiahship or Saviourhood. Wherefore, in the words of the Hebrew Letter, "Having such a high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, the Son of God, and being taken from among men, and touched with the feeling of our infirmities, let us hold fast to our confession," that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God," and unite upon this simple yet sublime faith.

However, this confession, to which the first Christians were brought, was more experimental than intellectual and formal. They felt more of the personality of Jesus than they understood and stated. They were brought face to face in touch of souls with the towering personality of Jesus, and the above confession was an attempt to state their experienced conviction, and they felt more than they were able to express in words. The New Testament record was an effort on the part of the first Christians to translate into words this new religious experience of God in Christ, and thus pass it on to future generations.

Jesus in the experience of men is an unending story, beginning in the days of his flesh with the first Christians and continuing through all ages and races. As T. R. Glover says:

“He has reacted on mankind, as we all know; he has transformed their ideas, blotted out old preconceptions and convictions, and through experience brought men to a new set of principles; but the process has been long and slow. It is not as if men had really known at first what he meant and what his principles involved or, indeed, guessed how much his personality was to signify. . . . In one region or another of experience humanity has experimented with Jesus, constantly with new and unexpected results; it has explored him with anxiety; it has enjoyed him; and by exploring and enjoying him it has found more and more in him, and it has grown in the process.”

It is interesting and profitable to trace Jesus as an experience in the lives of the first Christians, to see the unfolding of his personality and its impression and reaction upon the minds, hearts and lives of the first disciples; however, one is not prepared to do this, unless Jesus is an experienced conviction and presence in his own heart and life. Anyone that reads the New Testament as a mere chronology of outward facts misses the heart of the Gospels. Accordingly, the great truth revealed in Christ's conversation with the woman at the well is not God and His worship, which was incidental, but the woman's experience in realizing Jesus in her life, which is the vital thing in every life. She only partially succeeded in taking her conviction and blessing to others of the village; but, after they had spent two days in direct touch with Jesus, they said, “Now, we *know* that this is indeed the saviour of the world.” Philip did not attempt to convince Nathaniel by intellectual argument of the Messiahship of

Jesus, but simply said, "Come and see"; and thus he was convinced and confessed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, the king of Israel." Thus Jesus became an experienced conviction in the hearts and the lives of the first Christians; and Paul prays that he may be the same to all Christians, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"; and he expresses his own realization of Christ thus: "I have been crucified with Christ: and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith that is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

We can never hope for complete intellectual unity on the person of Jesus Christ, that is, upon a mental formula of him,—a written creed. Christian unity must come largely in the realm of experience upon a common religious experience of Jesus in the hearts and lives of his followers, such as is expressed in, "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth." We may never be able to agree fully in our statements of this religious experience; but our individual experiences come from the touch of a common Saviour, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God; and we can unite upon this common experienced conviction. Some confess glibly a mental formula about Jesus, and contend strongly and dogmatically for the same; but their faith is a cold legalistic form that reaches no deeper than mere intellectual assent, and can never influence life, and determine destiny. Such a denatured and devitalized faith is "a form of knowledge and truth," a mere "holding of a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof." The power of Christianity is an experienced conviction of the being and Saviourhood of Jesus; and faith in and devotion to

him is so essential to Christianity that it alone has been proposed by many as the foundation for Christian unity, as is stated by Rev. John J. Lawrence, Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod of New York, in the following quotation:

WHERE IS UNITY TO BE FOUND?

"It is found in absolute devotion to our Lord. It was in such devotion that the unity of the New Testament Church was grounded. Doctrinally there was serious division in that Church. No man can read the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians and say that in the realm of doctrine the Church was a unit. I think the differences separating Paul from Peter were more pronounced than those which divide the different groups in our beloved Church to-day. How were those differences bridged? By devotion to one Crucified, Risen, and Ascended Lord. Here is the passionate prayer of Paul: 'That I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.' There is the similar devotion of Peter: 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

"Being bound to Him, they were bound to each other. The closer two persons come to a third person, the closer they approach each other. This overmastering devotion to Jesus was the mysterious something against which the marshaled might of the Roman Empire dashed itself to pieces, as the wave breaks in spray against the rocks. This apostolic devotion was not to a system, nor a confession, nor any kind of formula. The Apostles' Creed had not been formulated, and much of our New Testament had not been written. It was devotion to a Person."

CHAPTER V

HIS CREATURE, MAN



THE fourth essential of Christianity, according to the text, is "the fathers and us,"—man, to whom "God has spoken in His Son." The author quotes from the Old Testament Scriptures, showing God's great interest in man. God has been supremely interested in man from the beginning, and Christianity is the final expression of His interest. Man is the end and purpose of Christianity; and without man Christianity would be without an end and reason for existence. While Christianity as a system of life and religion is the highest, truest and best, yet it is not an end in itself. It is *for man*, and has value and meaning only in relation to man. That is, Christianity as a whole and in all its parts, together with the world and everything in it, is *for man*.

So, then, any subject so vital and important to Christianity as man should receive appropriate treatment and place in all plans and discussions for Christian unity; however, this subject was passed with slight notice at Lausanne. It was touched upon in the report upon the Gospel, which received the approval of all, and which means much for Christian unity; but there was no adequate discussion and treatment of this subject. Christians cannot unite until they know well to what end and for what purpose they unite. If we are to have Christian

unity, we must, therefore, think together about man, who is the end and purpose of our unity, which constitutes the theme and purpose of this chapter.

Jesus was the first to emphasize man's supremacy over religion. David was not able to understand man's supremacy and dominion over nature, much less his supremacy over religion. Religion was regarded of more importance than man; but Jesus put man above religion, making religion *for* man instead of man *for* religion. Accordingly, he declared that the Sabbath and everything else in religion is for man, which gave religion a new objective. The Jews had made religion an end in itself, and had subjected everything to it. They were even robbing mothers and fathers of support and honor on the grounds that it was done in behalf of religion (Matt. 15:1-9); but Jesus rejected such a religion, and declared that true religion, which is founded on the word of God, and reaches the heart of man, is *for* man and not *for* God.

God does not need man's gifts, but man needs them; and God has such a deep interest in man that, when man gives to man, he gives to God. "Whosoever giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." All Christian service, therefore, must be in behalf of man and not God; and a religion that professes to exalt God to the detriment of man is not Christian. Christianity seeks the highest good of man, which distinguishes it from all other religions, which for the most part have sought to appease and exalt God at the sacrifice of man, and thereby divorced life and religion. Jesus in all his teaching began and ended with man. There is an attempt to-day, however, to begin with the universe, the cosmic whole, and to place man in a cosmic order and explain him as a part of the cosmic

whole, and thereby make everything continuous and uniform; but this was not Christ's view of man. He taught that the world and everything in it is for man. Man is not merely an integral part of the cosmic order,—a mere speck upon a speck; but the whole cosmic order, according to Jesus, is for man and especially religion which seeks his greatest good.

Jesus expressed the end and purpose of the religion which he came to establish, thus, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." This "abundant life" is the Christian *summum bonum* of life, and constitutes the great objective of Christianity, toward which everything in the Christian religion is directed. This goal of Christianity is an essential of Christian unity, because Christians cannot unite unless they know well for *what* they unite. A common purpose and end is an essential factor in bringing and holding people together. We come now to the consideration of the great objective of Christianity,—man's greatest good, for the pursuit and possession of which Christians unite. Man is a social being, and realizes his greatest good in touch and coöperation with others; and his greatest good is a good that he shares with others. This coöperation for the highest good of the individual and society as a whole is Christian unity.

Man, and especially the subject of his greatest good, has been the theme of prophet and philosopher from the beginning. No other subject is so vital and supreme in interest. The wisest of earth have given their lives to the study and solution of this greatest problem of man. God Himself has spoken on the subject. Man is the major theme of His revelation in His Son, Jesus Christ, who treated fully and clearly the question of man's greatest

good. Christ's solution is, we believe, the best; and it is herein proposed as the basis for Christian unity.

The question of man's highest interest and greatest good involves other related questions about man; namely, his origin, his nature, his value, his destiny, etc., which largely determine his highest good. These questions constitute what is known as anthropology. While Jesus did not use such a term, he had much to say about man, and answered all the following questions that have bearing upon his greatest good. What is man? What is his value? Whence came man? Whither is he going? are questions that must be answered before we can know his greatest good. If man is of the earth, a mere animal, then his highest good is, "Take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry," which is the philosophy of all materialists; but Jesus called the man who sought this as the end of life "a fool." He is a fool, because he blindly ignores or refuses to consider the above questions in their bearing upon the greatest good of life. These questions lie at the foundation of all religion and philosophy, and lead the way to the solution of life's greatest good. The wisest of earth have sought the answers to these questions in their quest for the *summum bonum* of life; and out of the answers to these questions come the ethics of life, which seeks to define conduct according to these answers and implications of the same. This chapter seeks to know Christ's answers to these questions and therefrom his solution of man's greatest good as the basis for Christian unity, which requires a common ethic and final goal of life.

Man's Origin and Nature

Man's origin and nature are largely one question, be-

cause his origin largely determines his nature, or what he is. If he is of the earth alone, he is earthy, material; and, if he is of the Spirit, God, he is spiritual, divine. The being of anything, and especially man, the highest form of life, is a mystery that is solved only in God. Science can help, but cannot speak the final word, so we turn to Jesus, in whom God has spoken to man, for the explanation of man. There are theories and explanations of man's origin and nature that profess to be independent of God; but they all start with an unknown cause, which, of course, does not account for man. The electron, the atom, and the molecule partly explain matter, and living cells partly explain life; but there must be an ultimate cause behind both, which, whatever it may be called, is God. Science has not done away with the necessity for God, but has established it. The creation of man, whether by divine fiat or divine evolution, is the greatest miracle and mystery in the Bible or out of it. That a clod should ever move, live, think and function in all respects as a man is beyond the comprehension and explanation of man. Neither science nor religion can fully explain all the mysteries of man's being. Scientists often read their own views into nature; and theologians often read their own ideas into divine revelation; but neither can be taken as the final explanation of man. Man is still seeking in both realms, science and religion, to know the truth about himself, but doubtless will never know fully in this life all the truth about himself, that is, all the mysteries of his being, "For now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as I was fully known."

All the theories to-day about man's origin and nature

are evolutionary. They differ only in where they start. Some begin with a single cell, which theistic evolutionists attribute to God, and atheistic evolutionists to an unknown force or cause; and others begin with a fully developed man and woman, created by divine fiat. Starting from these beginning points, both theories account for human life to-day by evolution, which consists of inheritance, environment and natural normal growth. We shall not undertake to discuss the merits or demerits of these theories or to harmonize the same. Whatever may be said for or against them, they are at best only theories, which places them beyond the scope of Christian unity. Christian unity can come only upon assured facts. Some extreme advocates of these theories may claim their theory to be an established fact, but the well-informed only claim it to be a plausible theory that accounts for most of the existing phenomena.

But all theories have their difficulties and gaps that have not yet been closed up, and are at best only working hypotheses. Until the facts about man's origin and nature are better known, all theories about the same should be held as private opinions, and not allowed to interfere with Christian unity; however, the religious world to-day seems to be on the verge of division over these theories. Now and then, however, there appears to be some common ground between them, which gives hope of unity. For instance, modern evolutionists are saying to-day that man did not spring from the monkey or ape, but his ancestors have become extinct, so the human species seems to be distinct from all others, which is common ground.

The church made a great mistake in taking up these discussions, which rightly belong in the realm of science; however, the church has not been wholly responsible for the trouble these discussions have caused. Pseudo-scientists have forced these issues upon the church, and thereby disturbed and disrupted it. Religion and science occupy complementary realms of truth, and should be coworkers for the highest good of man instead of antagonists, each making its own contribution to human life; but, when they are arrayed against each other, as extremists on both sides have caused, there is unnatural and hurtful warfare, which is destructive of both. Science and religion are both realms of God's truth, and should therefore not be brought into conflict, because truth cannot conflict with itself. Christ taught the unity of all truth, of which he is the expression and the embodiment (John 1:17; 14:6; Eph. 1:10); however, he did not claim to reveal *scientific* but *religious* truth. He left the field of science for human investigation and discovery, and spoke for God in the realm of religion alone. It is true that the realms of science and religion overlap at points, especially in the field of anthropology; but Jesus taught nothing about man contrary to known established science. For instance, Jesus said nothing about *how* man was made, but he revealed *who* made him; and the Bible nowhere explains the process of man's creation and development. That God made man, is an assured fact taught by both science and the Bible, which is sufficient for Christian unity; but, *how* He made him, is still largely a speculative question, and should not be allowed to interfere with the unity of the church.

We cannot hope for unity upon any of the theories of

man's origin until there is more known about it. Scientists, anthropologists and theologians are working on the solution of this problem; and until it is solved, there must be liberty and toleration in this realm of thinking. There is an acute interest in the issue to-day that threatens division in the church. Christian unity can be preserved only by all being tolerant and honest in the study of this question. All theories that do not deny the divine origin and nature of man must be tolerated and considered on their merits, and more light sought from every source. Christianity has nothing to fear or lose from these investigations. Christ did not reveal *how* God made man, but left man to discover this for himself. Some evolutionists construe Christ's illustration from the growth of corn, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" as teaching evolution, but nothing more than normal natural growth can be claimed for these words, which both theories teach. However, there seems to be little or no difference between what some call normal growth, and others progressive evolution. It is more a difference in terms than processes. Jesus taught normal natural progressive growth, but it could not be said that he taught modern evolution; however, he did not teach anything contrary to this theory. Nor did he teach the divine fiat theory of creation. He simply taught that God made man and that he is, therefore, divine in nature. He affirmed and defended his own divinity on the grounds of the divinity of man. (John 10:34-35.) Any theory, therefore, that denies the divine origin and nature of man is anti-Christ and anti-Christian, and can have no place in Christianity. That God made man, and he is, therefore, divine in nature, is the essential fact for Christian unity.

Man's Soul

Furthermore, there is something distinctive about man. God made the flowers, but the flowers are not divine in nature as man is. God gave to man something that places him far above all other created things, which, according to Jesus, is the soul. "Of *how much more value* are ye than the birds!" "Ye are of *more value* than many sparrows." "If God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how *much more* shall he clothe you?" "*How much more* then is a man of more value than a sheep?" "What shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his *soul*? What can he give in exchange for his *soul*?" Man's distinctive nature and value comes from the soul, which is God's special gift to man. "God breathed into man's nostrils, and he became a *living soul*." There has been much speculation about man's soul. Some say that man *has* a soul; others that he *is* a soul; and still others that he *becomes* a soul, when he reaches self-consciousness. They have little to say about the origin of man, but much about his becoming a man after ages of development. They dogmatically assume many prehistoric facts about man's development, and make many unproved statements that require as much faith as the divine fiat theory, which they reject because it must be accepted on faith. But what difference does it make *how* man became a man, or *how* he came to have a soul, just so he really is, or has one? Jesus did not explain the process, but he asserted the fact, which is the basis for Christian unity.

Christ also affirmed the immortality and potentiality of man's soul. Matter is immortal, but it is not capable of

as high development as man. The plant and animal are subject to a limited development, but are not capable of infinite growth as man. Man may "be filled unto all the fullness of God." So in the qualities and possibilities of man's soul lies its great value. Jesus affirmed the value of man's soul above everything else in the world, so any theory of life or religion that places a lower estimate upon man is not Christian. Christians, therefore, can unite with those only who attach supreme importance and value to man, and are willing to spend and be spent for man. The one sheep that went astray was worth going after and bringing back at great cost and effort, even at the sacrifice of the shepherd. This is Christ's estimate of man. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." Christians cannot, therefore, unite upon any program that places a lower estimate upon man, or questions the immortality and value of his soul.

So, then, it is "eternal life" that is the final goal of Christianity. Immortality of the soul is a necessary implication from all Christ's teaching about man, and also a direct assertion (Matt. 10:28). The resurrection was the hazy dream of prophets and seers in the Old Testament, but it is the bright morning star of hope in the New. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Immortality is the intuitive hope of the soul. It is a fact not to be proved but to be grasped with one's whole being. There has been much speculation and wide differences among Christians over the nature of immortality, whether it is of the body and soul or just the soul, whether

the soul goes direct to heaven or awaits the final resurrection and judgment, whether we shall know each other there, and what is the nature and extent of our being after death. There have been endless theories about the life-to-come, most of which have been highly speculative, and therefore beyond the scope of Christian unity. Paul gave some light upon the future life (1 Cor. 15), which consists largely of general statements; and as to specific information John, peering across the dividing river between time and eternity, wrote in his old age: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is." We are exhorted to be like Christ here, and are assured that we shall be like him over there, so eternal life hereafter is but a projection of life here, and is largely determined by what we are here. "He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still." But it is the fact of the resurrection and immortality rather than the nature of the same that is the basis of Christian unity.

Man's Sin

Man's condition and attainment here and hereafter are largely determined by sin. Sin is the destinating fact of life. Jesus taught both the *reality* and *seriousness* of sin. "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone." "Every one that committeth sin is the bond servant of sin." "The wages of sin is death." Anyone that doubts or lightly regards sin is a knave or a fool. The problem

of sin is a perplexing one, but peace here and hereafter depends upon its solution. The wisest and greatest of earth have wrestled with this problem; but the only solution that satisfies and saves is Christ's. "If the Son shall make you free [from sin], ye shall be free indeed." This freedom and atonement for sin through Christ is an essential of Christianity, with which Christian unity has to do. A unity that takes no notice of sin is not Christian. Christ warned against the leaven of sin, that it must be cast out, otherwise it will leaven and destroy the whole. He did not pray for the unity of his disciples, until Judas, the leaven of sin, was cast out. Christian unity is, therefore, a union of saints, not sinners.

There have been many theories and wide differences on the subject of sin, its origin, its nature, its removal, its cure, etc. Speculation on the origin of sin has caused much trouble. Whether it originated in Satan, and is perpetuated by ministering demons, as was believed in Christ's day; or whether it originated in human beings, and is perpetuated by human agents, as believed to-day; or whether we sin because Adam sinned, or because of innate original sin or inherited and cultivated inclinations; whether sin is natural or unnatural; whether Adam was created sinless or sinful, or whether *he fell up or down* matters little so far as we are concerned. All these questions are more or less speculative, and are of little importance and value in the solution of the problem of unity. The fact, the power and cure of sin are the important matters that have to do with Christian unity, and must be considered. These claimed the attention of the Apostle Paul. "If what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me . . . bringing me

into captivity under the law of sin in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The only deliverance from sin that Paul saw was "through Jesus Christ," and no other escape has yet been found. Sin and salvation through Christ were the major themes of all Paul's preaching and writing, and were also the keynote in Christ's great commission to his disciples (Luke 24:46-47). In the estimation of Christ and Paul, sin is not merely mistaken thinking and acting,—an error in viewpoint, "harmful thoughts ending in harmful deeds," as modern psychologists teach to-day. The late psychology of *behaviorism* is too weak to support high moral standards. Jesus and Paul spoke of sin in the strongest terms, and gave the strictest moral code. To them sin was a moral crime and a spiritual disease, consequently the need of pardon and cure, which Jesus alone could effect. Herein lies a weakness of the Modernist movement. It has in it no place or adequate cause for deep conviction of sin. It is lacking, as Dean Ingle expresses it, in "the sense of sin"; or, as Doctor Fosdick says, "The greatest peril of liberalism is ethical disloyalty to Jesus." In fact, there can be no high and holy living without a deep sense of sin and a way of escape from the same.

The atonement and cure for sin are important matters in any religion, and especially so in Christianity. To get rid of the guilt and consequences of sin has been a crying need and a perplexing question from the beginning; and there have been many systems of hamartiology and soteriology devised to this end. Christ and the Apostles did not reject these systems *in toto*, which were founded largely upon animal sacrifice, penance, isolation, and

mysticism, but gathered up the spiritual truths from all of them into "the Cross," the atonement through Christ, which also has its mysteries of faith. From the beginning the shedding of blood has been associated with remission of sins, which led the writer of the Hebrew Letter to say, "I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." Some to-day, however, seem to take offense at all blood atonement, and regard all such as mere symbols; but, according to the New Testament, there is more in the shedding of Christ's blood upon the cross than a mere symbol; however Christ's propitiation for sin is a matter for acceptance rather than speculation. Philosophizing about the cross has led to wide differences and divisions among Christians; and it is doubtful whether any have fathomed the full significance of Christ's death. The Fundamentalist emphasizes the material, formal side of the atonement; and the Modernist the psychological and spiritual side. The latter rejects the substitutionary idea in the atonement, making Christ's death a mere moral example of self-sacrifice; while the former rejects the moral example idea, and makes Christ's death a complete formal propitiation for sins. The same was true in the beginning of the church. To the Jewish formulist "Christ crucified" was "a stumblingblock"; and to the Greek rationalist, "foolishness," but still now, as then, "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Paul disclaims all human ability to comprehend fully the philosophy of the cross, but he declares it to be "the power of God and the wisdom of God," because Jesus is "righteousness and sanctification and redemption," which are the essentials of atonement for sin, and sufficient for Christian unity.

There seems to be a return to-day on the part of scholars to Paul's conception of the atonement, as appears in the following quotation from C. H. Dodd, of Mansfield College, Oxford, one of the younger English scholars, whose book on St. Paul has made him known to a wide circle of readers, who says:

"To-day we are often told that Christ did not die in our stead; He died to show us how to live; and, if we can but be like Him, we shall be saved men. True enough; but if the Twelve were not equal to that high call, still less are most of us. To hold up the example of Jesus and bid poor sinners imitate the heroism of His life and death is to overwhelm rather than to inspire. Take us for what we are, there is something unreal in the suggestion that such small 'self-denials' we can make are comparable with the cross of Christ or can count as 'dying to live.' At least, if 'the word of the cross' is to be a gospel, it must reckon with people who, by nature and habit, are very little capable of that self-sacrifice which is the fine flower of human character. We had better be true and humble about it and confess that, if we are to be saved, we do need to have something done for us. Jesus was aware that He was dying very definitely for those twelve men who were so little worthy of Him; and not only for them, but, for the 'many' who stood outside that inner circle. He died as Son of Man; and that enigmatic phrase, whatever else it may mean, bears in it the thought of a representative humanity. He died as representative of all men who are willing to accept what He did as being for them. Whoever gives hearty assent and consent to what Jesus meant, has his part in what Jesus did. In Him we died to live, for He died on our behalf."

But it is claimed that the above is Paul's and not Christ's conception of the cross; but Jesus taught nothing contrary to Paul's view and in fact everything that he said and did about sin, including his death, looks to this end. (See Mark 9:12; Luke 9:22; 19:10; 22:22, 37; 21:28; 24:24, 46-47; John 3:14-17; 8:24; 12:23, 24, 27; 19:30, etc.) All ac-

cept these statements of Christ about the atonement with different interpretation and application, the liberty of which must be granted, provided his statements are not destructively interpreted; and all accept Paul's interpretation of Christ's death as "the power of God and the wisdom of God," and all believe that there is "righteousness and sanctification and redemption" through "Christ crucified," which is sufficient ground for unity. The atonement for sin through Christ is broad enough to hold all those who regard man as sinful and lost, and look to "Christ and him crucified" for salvation, which is the heart of Christian hamartiology and soteriology and the basis for Christian unity.

How Christ's atonement for sin is made available, and to whom, has also been a troublesome and divisive question. Universalists hold that Christ's atonement was made available and efficacious for all, and all will, therefore, be saved through him; while others hold that it is available for all, but conditioned upon each individual's acceptance and appropriation. The old view, that man is saved by unconditional grace, has about passed away; and the New Testament view, "by grace have ye been saved *through faith*," which is conditional, is largely accepted to-day. It is further conditioned on obedience (Acts 3:22-23). So there is a human side to Christian salvation from sin, which was in Paul's mind when he wrote, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." The question, therefore, What must man do to be saved?, which is often asked and answered in the New Testament, is pertinent and important, and has often disturbed and divided the church; however, there is increasing unity on this question to-day. All agree on the

necessary elements; namely, faith, repentance, baptism, salvation. The only difference is that of the place and order of these elements. Some reject the above order, and insist on the following order: faith, repentance, salvation, baptism. The difference is over the place of baptism in the plan of salvation. But what difference does the place and order make, just so baptism is in it? The Lord will see to it that the order is right. This is a matter that must be left to the Lord anyway, because it is the Lord's plan and not man's. Christian unity must rise above such minor differences. After all it is the Lord who saves. We are not saved by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, but we are saved by Christ, in whom we have believed. We are not saved by repenting of our sins, but by Christ, who has led us to repentance. And we are not saved by being baptized, but by Christ, into whom we have been baptized. Christian salvation is centered in Christ; and upon this salvation all Christians can unite.

But no mere philosophy of salvation can save one from sin. Correct knowledge is a help, but the final victory over sin depends upon personal choice of the right and a fight against the wrong. In spite of all the good influences of the past and present, sin is still with us, and the fight goes on against the sins of "the flesh and the spirit," "against the wiles of the Devil, against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places," so all Christians, clad in the "whole armor of Christ," need to unite in this battle against sin in themselves and society as a whole; and all Christians can thus unite without complete hamartiological and soteriological

agreement. Christian unity is a union of Christians against sin in all forms and in all places.

Sin repented of and triumphed over contributes to character, but held to and followed leads to death; yet we cannot get rid of sin by sheer strength of the will. We must also look to Christ for help, who alone is able to "deliver out of the body of this death." Our part is to "abhor evil, and cleave to that which is good," and coöperate with Jesus, who is our deliverer from sin, and thereby lift ourselves and the race to higher levels of living, where righteousness and love reign supreme. To this end all Christians must unite, because the victory over sin in ourselves and others can never be won except through unity. Divided we fight a losing battle against Satan and his hosts, or against the forces of evil, whatever they may be.

But united under the leadership of Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation, and under the banner of the cross, we cannot fail. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The cross is not only an emblem of victory over sin, in reconciling man with God; but it is a great factor in Christian unity, in reconciling Christians to each other. Paul relates how Jewish and Gentile Christians, who were far removed from each other, were "reconciled in one body unto Christ *through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.*" The vision of the cross dispels all enmity from the heart, for no one can cherish bitterness and sectarianism in the presence of the cross. The cross is the only influence in the world that can empty the heart of all hatred, and fill it with the sweetness of love for God and man. The love that overshadows the cross warms, softens and

melts the hearts of all alienated Christians, and unites them in the bonds of unity. If all Christians ever unite, it will be at the foot of the cross, where alone they can be reconciled and united. Herein lies the strong appeal of the Lord's Supper for Christian unity. It brings all together at the foot of the cross. For this reason there should be union communion services in every community as often as is expedient. If all cannot participate, let all who can sit down together around the table of the common crucified Lord, and they will go away nearer together.

Man's Destiny

While salvation through Christ is "by grace through faith," it is further conditioned on man's active acceptance and appropriation by a consistent Christian life. Man, being a free moral agent, can accept or reject this salvation, and can live or not live the Christian life; and in so doing he becomes the author of his own destiny. By choosing and doing the right he becomes righteous; and by choosing and doing the wrong he becomes sinful, and thus determines his destiny. By controlling his thoughts and deeds, he can build a Christian character of such traits as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, against which there is no law," and which is fit for heaven both here and hereafter; but by following "the lust of the flesh" such as "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like," he builds a character fit only for hell. Thus he rises to heaven, or sinks into hell. Christian unity is not altogether a negative fight, but a struggle for

the right against the wrong, for heaven against hell; it is a union of those who choose and seek heaven here and hereafter, and endeavor to escape hell here and hereafter.

There has been much speculation and wide differences among Christians about heaven and hell. Whether heaven and hell are places or states or both, or what is the nature of our being after death, whether or not we shall know and be known there, what are the rewards and punishments, etc., are more or less speculative questions, and should not be allowed to interfere with Christian unity. The fact that we have a destiny here and hereafter, and we are largely responsible for the same, is the basis for Christian unity. The old theory of man's irresponsibility through divine election and predestination is rejected to-day; and all must unite in an effort to save themselves and others.

Man's Greatest Good

Finally, in view of man's divine origin and nature, his immortality, his moral and spiritual condition, and his destiny here and hereafter, what is the greatest good of man? According to Jesus, the end of life is life itself; it is to "have life, and have it abundantly." The fullest and the most abundant life, both physical, intellectual and spiritual, is the *summum bonum* of life; and the means of reaching this greatest good is "the kingdom of God." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This is Christ's ultimatum for the pursuit and possession of life's greatest good, which constitutes the great objective of Christianity and the ultimate end of Christian unity.

Pleasure or happiness is not the greatest good of life,

as many have thought, because, whenever happiness is sought as an end in itself, it is found to be an unworthy, disappointing end. Pleasure and happiness have value only as they contribute to life. Furthermore, sorrow or suffering is one of the great contributing factors to life and character. Jesus himself "was made perfect through suffering"; and the ministry of suffering is more or less a beneficial factor in everyone's life. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is why Paul was able to "rejoice in his sufferings," "knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope; and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts." God intended that we should get all the pleasure possible from the five senses, and have all the possible intellectual and spiritual joys from the mind and soul; but to make physical thrills and intellectual and spiritual raptures the object of life results in a religion merely "for the loaves and fishes," which is simply refined selfishness. Both joy and sorrow awaited Paul, as he knew; but he thought little of either, because he was "pressing on toward a higher and more glorious mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The abundant life in Christ was his goal; and it mattered little whether this was attained by his life or his death.

Nor is righteousness the greatest good of life, as some have thought. The Jews made the mistake of making "a law of righteousness" the goal of life, and failed to achieve righteousness and salvation by law. While right living is attended and followed by many great blessings, it is not an end in itself. Righteousness is a relative

value, because, if there is nothing to be righteous for, no supreme good of life, in relation to which everything has value, then righteousness has no goal, and is in vain. However, righteousness is a higher goal than happiness. It is better to be right than happy; but it is better to "live abundantly" than to be either happy or righteous, or both.

The means of reaching this abundant life in Christ is "the kingdom of God." The kingdom of heaven on earth was the major theme in all Christ's teaching and preaching. By becoming a citizen of the kingdom of God on earth and seeking his righteousness therein man reaches the greatest good of life both here and hereafter. This ideal kingdom or reign of God on earth, which Jesus came to establish, is the only hope of the individual and race to reach the highest, the fullest and most abundant life here and hereafter, and constitutes the great objective of Christianity, for which Christians must unite.

That Christians may unite for the realization of this reign of God in the life of the individual and society as a whole, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of this kingdom, which Jesus came to teach and establish. The kingdom ideal, which Jesus taught, is too far-reaching and inclusive for brief summary. There has been a great interest in recent years in the study and exposition of the kingdom; and there have been many sermons, addresses and books written to define and elaborate Christ's idea of the kingdom of God, so there is little need of further teaching along this line. It has been clearly shown that the kingdom of God, according to Jesus, is the entire social whole shot through and through with the principles of Christianity, which he taught and embodied in his life

and character. We are concerned here only about the application of Christ's teaching on the kingdom to the problem of Christian unity.

In the first place, Christ's kingdom of heaven has a positive ideal ethic for all the relationships of life, the norms of which are contained in Christ's words, deeds and character as recorded in the New Testament. His ethics is an essential of his kingdom, and a fundamental for Christian unity; however, not the only essential, as some seem to teach. Pure cold ethics alone can never save, nor unite a people, as the philosophic systems of the past and present clearly show. The ethical approach to the problem of Christian unity may be the proper approach; but Christian unity must go further. The International Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm was a step in the right direction; but, if we stop with ethical life and works, the cause of Christian unity will not be greatly helped. The World Conference on Faith and Order and other doctrinal matters endeavored to solve the intellectual problems in Christian unity. Whether or not such differences are vital and important, they are barriers to unity, and must be removed by agreement or some working understanding of the same.

Next, Christ's kingdom was first for this world,—for the common everyday experiences of this life. The religious world has been a long time in grasping the practical social side of the kingdom. In fact, it seems to have been entirely lost sight of during some periods in the church. Religion was individualized; that is, the saving of individuals by having each to pass through the saving process, with no effort to save society as a whole, became the objective of Christianity. Consequently, social standards

and requirements became low and degrading, and social conditions un-Christian. Religion was looked upon as something above and beyond the common ordinary things of life. It consisted in "setting your affections on things above" with little or no regard for things below. They thought so much of the streets of the New Jerusalem and "the city not made with hands" that they forgot the streets of the city in which they lived, which were full of need, suffering, wickedness and unspeakable conditions. Religion was sought for in visions and dreams and spiritual ecstasies on the mountain tops and in the third heavens. But such was not the religion and kingdom which Jesus taught and endeavored to establish. He addressed himself and ministered first to the physical earthly needs of man, and then to the spiritual. He spoke to men in the streets and in the shops or wherever he found man in need. He spoke to their common everyday needs, and helped them to bear their daily burdens. For this reason, the common people heard him gladly, because he had a message for the betterment of life in this world. The kingdom, which he preached, and came to establish, was first of all a better social order for this world. He purposed to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth; that is, to make a heaven out of this earth, rather than to take the earth to heaven. Christian unity must, therefore, have a practical program for social welfare and betterment of world conditions.

There has been a reëmphasis of Christ's social Gospel in recent years, which has resulted in much good in Christianizing common everyday life; but there is a danger to-day of going to the opposite extreme and preaching and practicing a Gospel for this-world-alone, which is as great a mistake as the old view of the kingdom. The

kingdom, which Christ preached, was also for the world-to-come. The advocates of the Social Gospel to-day are so obsessed with social service, social betterment, etc., that they can see nothing else in the teaching of Christ. They are so concerned about *things below* that they have lost sight of *things above*. They are so given to the task of making a better world here that they have forgotten that there is a world-to-come. There is in fact a social philosophy to-day, which claims to speak the original mind of Christ, that is in reality a virtual denial of much of what Christ taught about the kingdom of God. Such may be humanitarianism, but it is not Christianity. Owen and Ingersoll preached the former, but they denied the latter. The soul and not the body is central in the teaching of Christ. Some seem to think that the kingdom of God consists in having well-fed, well-clothed and well-sheltered bodies. While Christ was concerned first about the things of this world, he did not stop there, but made them the means of reaching the world-to-come. While he sought to establish the kingdom of God on the earth, he made this a means of reaching the kingdom of God in the skies. Heaven was as real to Jesus as the earth, and far more important. If, as Paul writes, we have hope only of this world, we are of all creatures most miserable. If Christianity is merely a better social world order of righteousness, justice, mercy, brotherly love, etc., it is of the earth, and will sooner or later go the way of all the earth. Christianity seeks not only man's greatest good here but also hereafter; but whatever is good for this world is good for the world-to-come, because "eternal life" is but the projection of life here. Christian unity is, therefore, a union of all those who seek man's greatest

good in this world and the world-to-come as expressed and embodied in Christ's kingdom of God, which begins here, and finds final and perfect realization in the world-to-come.

Furthermore, while the salvation of society is the *ultimate* objective of Christianity, the salvation of the individual is the *immediate* objective. Jesus worked directly with the individual, and endeavored to reach society as a whole through the individual. Accordingly, he often turned away from the multitude to the individual. (See Mark 1:38, 40; 5:25-34; 10:46-52, etc.) Man turns from the individual to the multitude. He would cross seas to address a multitude, and in the end accomplish little or nothing; but Jesus sought out the individual, and saved him, who became a unit and leaven in the salvation of society. He captured the world by caring for the individual. He organized no committees, made no financial and social drives, started no reform societies, and promoted no public propaganda of any kind. He preached and practiced an individual social Gospel.

The modern emphasis of the social Gospel has resulted in losing sight of the individual, which is a worse error than the individualism of the past. In swinging away from individualism the church has gone into socialism, which is a worse state than the former. Any program for the church that ignores, or fails to exalt, the individual is not Christian. Christian unity can come only on a program that aims at the salvation of society through the individual, which was Christ's method. The highest good of the individual is the only practical way of realizing the highest good of society, which is the aim and basis of Christian unity.

CHAPTER VI

HIS CHURCH



THE final essential or fundamental of Christianity, according to the Hebrew text, is the church, which the author calls "the brethren," "the sanctified," "many sons unto glory," "His house, whose house we are,"—"the church" (Heb. 2:10; 3:6). The author, writing to Jews, who accepted three of the essentials of Christianity; namely, God, His word and His creature, man, has little to say about these; but he elaborates and contends for the other two, His Son, Jesus Christ, and His church, which many of the Jews did not accept. He shows the superiority of Jesus as prophet, priest and king and the superiority of the church over the Temple as an institution for worship, which is the major theme of the Letter. He regards the church as an essential of Christianity; otherwise he would not have written this apologetic for the church. This apology for the church, addressed to Jews of that day, contains much that is provincial and Jewish in its appeal; yet it also contains the fundamentals of the church for all ages and races, which constitute the foundation for Christian unity. This chapter is an exposition of the church as an essential of Christianity, and seeks to discover the essentials of the church as the foundation for Christian unity.

The essentiality of the church was not questioned at

Lausanne. In fact, the entire program, as made out by the subjects committee (The Message of the Church, The Nature of the Church, The Church's Common Confession of Faith, The Ministry of the Church, The Sacraments of the Church and The Relation of Existing Churches to Christian Unity), was devoted to a consideration of the church; and practically all of the time of the Conference was taken up with a study of the church. Judging alone from the emphasis placed upon the church in this Conference, one would conclude that the church constitutes the whole of Christianity; but such could not be said to be the attitude and view of those in the Conference, because, in the first place, the call of the Conference, "Faith and Order," limited it to the church, and the subjects committee accordingly devoted the entire program to a study of the church, so there was no time nor place for the consideration of other essentials of Christian unity. This emphasis of the church, however, was partly justifiable, because most of the barriers to unity are in the church, which brings the church to the front in any unity conference. While the other essentials of Christian unity, which have been considered in the preceding chapters, should have received more consideration in the Conference, which was a manifest and serious deficiency of the Conference, the Conference was right in its thorough study of the church, because the church is an essential of Christian unity, and herein lie most of the difficulties to unity; and this joint study of the church on the part of so many differing representatives at Lausanne will, we believe, be effective for the unity of the church.

No one to-day holds to the essentiality of the Temple, as did those addressed by the author of the Hebrew Letter;

but many to-day go to the opposite extreme, and deny all institutional religion; that is, they hold that not only the Temple but also the church with all its external forms and subsidiary organizations is a human and not a divine institution. They claim that the kingdom of God, which Jesus preached, is the only divine concept, which is a spiritual institution, and cannot, or should not, be institutionalized. Accordingly, they reject all of Christ's references to the church as interpolations, and endeavor to show that the church was an afterthought and creation of the Apostles, especially Paul, who was the real founder of the church, and who thereby diverted Christianity from the spiritual kingdom-ideal of Jesus to the institutional church-ideal. If this be true, then the church is a non-essential of Christianity, and therefore has nothing to do with Christian unity; but this was not the view of the author of the Hebrew Letter. He declares that both Christ and the church are divine. "Both he [Christ] that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified [the church] are of one [God]." All are "the offspring of God" by creation; but Jesus "gave to those that believe on his name the right to become the children of God; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God." Such are the spiritual children of God, and constitute the church, "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." These as "living stones are built up a spiritual house," "whose house we are,"—"the church." This is evidently institutional Christianity; and all those who speak and write in the New Testament regard the church as an essential part of Christianity.

While Jesus made only two references to the church according to the New Testament record, these are well

authenticated, and are sufficient to show his high valuation of the church, which are as follows: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." "If he refuse to hear them, tell it to the church: and, if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the Publican." As his words to Peter indicate, the church as an institution was not then established, and was not established until the day of Pentecost after his death, when it is mentioned first as an existing institution, which accounts for Christ's having so little to say about it; but Jesus authorized the institutionalizing of the kingdom by the Apostle (Matt. 16:19); and he identified himself with the institution in his rebuke of Paul for persecuting the church (Acts 9:5). While the actual establishment of the church was committed to the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christ prepared the material, and gave the ideals for the church in his personal ministry. All his teaching about the kingdom was preparatory for the church, which is simply the kingdom institutionalized, and is the agency and means of bringing in the universal kingdom of God on earth. It is God's militant institution for the overthrow of evil and the propagation of the reign of God on earth. Furthermore, the church is the final judge and adjuster of all social differences (Matt. 18:17). The above functions, assigned to the church by Jesus, are vital to the welfare of society, and establish the essentiality of the church.

Paul states the essential functions of the church in his letter to Timothy as follows: "These things I write unto thee, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of

the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." In the first place, the church is "the house of God,"—an institution to clothe, feed, shelter and care for the bodies of men and women. Benevolence is a vital work, and was committed by Jesus to the church (Matt. 25:31-46). Also, the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth,"—an institution for the education of man. Man is an educable being; and what he is, is largely determined by his education; and without education he is little more than an animal. Furthermore, the government and control of man in the kingdom of God under the New Covenant is through religious education, which is committed to the church. "I will put my laws on their heart, and upon their mind also will I write them." The church is also "the *ecclesia* of the living God,"—the divine assembly for the worship of God. Man is a worshiping being, and must have an institution for worship, and without such he makes one for himself with idols for his god. The function of worship is also committed to the church; and without this institution Christian worship would soon pass from the world. The church is, therefore, essential to the welfare of man. It serves and meets all the needs of man, both physical, mental and spiritual; and is therefore an essential part of Christianity, and must enter into any plan for Christian unity.

History also verifies the claim of the church as an essential of Christianity by the character of the civilization in every age, nation and community where the church has been established. Without the influence of the church, life and property are not safe. Furthermore, the church has been the agency for the propagation and spread of the principles of Christianity; and without the church Chris-

tianity would have soon become extinct, and the world would have relapsed into degraded heathenism. Christianity without some visible institution such as the church would have been an unseen and unknown force, and would have soon passed into oblivion. Such a religion would have been a soul without a body, and could have had no place or influence in the world. Institutionless religion such as is being advocated by the advocates of the Social Gospel or Socialists to-day has never existed in the world for any length of time. While Jesus preached a social Gospel without an organized institution, he was at the same time preparing his disciples for the institutionalizing of this ideal in the church, which they did as soon as they received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The church was not organized on that day; but by preaching the gospel of salvation from sin and administering the ordinances of the same the visible church was formed, which became a worshiping body, and increased day by day until it soon became a great institution. It was organized as the needs of organization arose; and from this time on the church was a visible working institution. After the dispersion from Jerusalem the church was established and institutionalized in every place where the disciples preached and made converts, until there was a church in almost every place of the then known world. To deny institutional Christianity is, therefore, to reject much of the preparatory work of Jesus himself and all of the work of the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Even if institutionless Christianity could be made a reality, it would result in individualism instead of Christian unity, because it would have no real existence except in the individual soul. In such a purely subjective religion

there could be no place for any visible unity. While Christian unity is "a unity of the spirit," it is also outward and visible in the company and association of Christians. Jesus prayed for the unity of the disciples, who were then assembled in a visible body; and Paul, in his prayer for unity (Eph. 3:14-19), closes with the phrase, "in the church," showing that Christian unity is to be realized in this institution. Christian unity as Christianity itself must, therefore, have visible form in an institution. It must be a visible unity of the organized church.

The only organization that the Apostles effected was that of the local body, such as "the church of God which is in Corinth," etc.; and they worked and prayed for the unity of these local bodies. Christian unity with them was largely a local problem; and it is still so to-day, but it has been greatly complicated by the many larger denominational bodies, which the advocates of unity are endeavoring to unite. There is little hope, however, of uniting these great denominational bodies, which had no existence in the Apostolic church, because Christian unity means the destruction of denominations, and bodies are not disposed to destroy themselves. The field or scope of Christian unity should, therefore, be largely confined to local bodies. The many local denominational bodies in the same community are the shame and scandal of Christianity anyway; and, when these are united, the reproach is largely removed, and the unity problem is largely solved, because the larger unities will then come of themselves. So Christian unity work should be directed first toward local unity instead of the larger denominational unities. It is doubtful whether the large denominational bodies really want to unite; but in most cases the local bodies

desire to unite, and would do so, if the larger denominational bodies would take their hands off them, and leave them free to act for themselves. Christian unity must begin at the bottom with the individual and the individual local church, and work up toward universal unity of the whole body of Christ.

While Christian unity is largely a local problem in the local visible church, the invisible universal church and the unity of the same must not be lost sight of, but worked toward as an ultimate end. While the local visible body was the only organization effected by the Apostles, they recognized and kept in mind the one invisible universal body of Christ, of which all Christians are members. (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:25.) This larger concept of the church was continually in their minds. There is a local visible *ecclesia* and also a universal invisible *ecclesia*; and both these concepts of the church need to be kept in mind in all Christian unity work. The local visible church cannot isolate itself from the whole body of Christ as an independent unit, but must order itself as an integral part of the larger whole, the universal body of Christ. Christ had the unity of this church in mind, when he said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."

So then, inasmuch as the church is an essential part of Christianity, and therefore an essential of Christian unity, the question as to what the church must be, to be a united church, must be considered, and agreeably settled. There must be a common standard or ideal for the church, toward which all aspire, for the church to become a united church. This does not mean that there must be a stand-

ardized uniformity in all churches, but there must be at least a general agreement on the broad essentials of the church. The church, as well as Christianity as a whole, has its essential parts, which must be known and accepted by all to be a united church, so we come now to the consideration of these essentials of the church.

To bring all Christians to think alike about the church is a difficult if not an impossible undertaking, and they may never be able to agree about everything in the church; but at least they should be able to agree upon the essentials of the church, so let us think together toward this end. This was the end aimed at in the Lausanne Conference; and, although it was not realized, some progress was made toward the same. Every denomination and individual member of the Conference were given an opportunity to state their views of the church; and from these statements synthetic reports of agreements and differences were drafted, and passed on to the participating churches for their consideration. All were agreeably surprised at the many agreements found, yet at the same time were equally baffled by as many insurmountable differences.

The most vital or fundamental difference was over the question of the church's being an organization or an organism. This difference was brought out at the very beginning in the addresses of Doctor Cadman and the Bishop of Manchester. The question of authority in religion enters largely into this issue, and determines one's position. Those who hold to the authority of the traditions of the church make it a fixed organization; while those who hold to the authority of the New Testament alone, that is, the authority of Jesus and his Apostles, regard it as a growing organism, which it evidently was

in the beginning. Traditionalists have endeavored to give it a fixed form and organization, but they have never been able to pour it into a mold that satisfies all; and on the other hand evolutionists have endeavored to cultivate and guide its growth and development into a form and organization that satisfies all; but the many divided churches show their failure to do so. To the one Christian unity is a matter of conformity to traditional form and organization; while to the other it is a matter of growing toward a common ideal, the norms of which are found in the New Testament. The author of this book sees no hope for unity between these views of the church, and, holding to the latter, pleads for unity upon the same. So we come to the New Testament for the essential norms of the church, which Jesus and his Apostles prescribed for his one united church, into which he purposed to bring all ages and races,—“one flock, one shepherd.”

The Conference at Lausanne was united in looking to the New Testament for its concepts of the church; but some wished to add also the traditions of the church, which was the chief source of differences. The Conference studied the church under seven subjects, and made accordingly seven reports, which are now in the possession of churches, and are accessible to all Christians. Frequent references to these reports will be made in this chapter, which is in part a discussion of these reports, so they are published in the Appendix to this book. In the report on The Message of the Church, which was largely written by Doctor Diessmann, who is the highest authority on the New Testament, and is a strong advocate of New Testament ideals, there was unanimous agreement, which means much for the cause of unity. The report is simple,

clear and true to New Testament ideals, and deserves to be memorialized by all the churches. In the report on The Nature of the Church there was agreement on the origin, the head, the definition, the work, the oneness and the characteristics of the church; but there were wide differences between traditionalists and evolutionists over the form and expression of the church, which the report sets out. The report, however, omits the primary essentials of the New Testament ideal, to which we now invite attention.

Broadly speaking, there are, according to Christ, two essentials of the church; namely, spirit and truth. (John 1:17; 4:24; 6:63; 16:13.) In fact, everything that is truly Christian must have Christ's spirit and truth in it. Christian worship must be "in spirit and truth"; and the church, being the institution for Christian worship, must be characterized by the same, because there could not be that kind of worship in any other kind of an institution. "In spirit" has reference to the inner subjective things of the church; and "in truth" refers to the objective expression of the same. The church must, therefore, be spiritual in nature,—a church of the spirit; and it must also be "in truth," that is, conformed to truth,—a church of the truth. A church, therefore, to be a church of Christ, must be both a church of the *spirit* and a church of the *truth*.

Some emphasize the spiritual side of the church, the church of the spirit, and have little or nothing to say about the doctrinal side of the church, the church of the truth; while others emphasize the objective church of the truth, and have little or nothing to say about the subjective church of the spirit. Out of this over and under emphasis of these two essentials of the church have arisen

all the differences about the church. Some exalt the church of the spirit, and reject the church of the truth, or authority with its creeds, doctrines, forms, sacraments, ordinances, etc.; while others exalt the church of the truth, or authority, and reject the church of the spirit. Herein lies the chief difference between Modernists and Fundamentalists. Quotations from those that hold these two differing conceptions of the church will serve to make this distinction clear. Cardinal Newman, an extreme advocate of the church of authority, says:

“From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion, and cannot enter into the idea of any other religion.”

Professor Clow, of Glasgow College, a nonconformist but a mild advocate of the church of external forms, writes as follows:

“The Church, as the society of believing men gathered around Christ, its organization, its worship, and preëminently its sacraments, is the visible and historic proof of the necessity of these social ordinances. The first disciples began with a personal and mystic devotion to Christ. They passed on to a discipleship in His truth. Their faith rose at last to a social religious life, by whose worship and sacraments their faith was nurtured and disciplined. . . . The Christian sacraments are the interpretation of His mind and the declaration of His purpose. They were accepted and observed without controversy by the primitive believers.”

Professor Peabody, of Harvard, who is an apologist for the church of the spirit, writes:

“The Church of the Spirit cherishes one saying of Irenæus: ‘Where the Church is there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is there is the Church and every kind of

grace.' . . . This comprehensive fellowship of religious experience is sustained by the mighty promise that the Spirit of truth, when it is come, will guide men into all truth. To the Church of the Spirit, the most precious incidents of Christian history are not those of theological or ecclesiastical transition, but those of religious revival,—the testimony of saint and seers, the experience of holy souls, the convincing evidence of the life of God in the souls of men."

It is evident from the above that Professor Peabody cares little for the externals of the church, for which Cardinal Newman cares everything. They are far apart in their conceptions of the church; and it is hardly possible to bring them together. They occupy the far extremes of Christianity; and there is little or no hope of bringing the Christian world together on either of these extremes. While there was no discussion of the church of authority and the church of the spirit in the Lausanne Conference, these two views of the church were evident in the Conference; and there was little hope of unity between the two. The only hope for Christian unity is upon the common middle ground of the New Testament conception of the church,—a church of both the spirit and the truth.

When we come to the New Testament for our conception of the church, we find no such conflict between the church of the spirit and the church of authority as exists in the world to-day; but we find both of these churches in one,—a church of both the spirit and the truth,—a church that is spiritual in nature and authoritative in truth. It is filled with the spirit of Christ, and founded upon his truth. It is not a mere spiritual ideal, as Professor Peabody would have us believe; nor is it a mere doctrinal system, as Cardinal Newman holds; but it is both a spiritual ideal and a doctrinal system in one. Professor Peabody says,

"The spirit of truth is more essential than the forms of truth"; but why cannot we have both the spirit and form of truth? There is nothing in the one that excludes the other, or is inconsistent with the other. There is nothing in the doctrinal system taught by Christ and the Apostles that is contrary to their spiritual ideals, nor vice versa. These two phases of the church are perfectly and beautifully blended in the New Testament conception of the church. It is true that Christ antagonized the formal institutional religion of his day, but not because it was formal and institutional, but because it was that alone. It had no spirit or soul in it. It had lost the first essential of true religion, "in spirit," and had added many superfluous forms that were not "in truth," so it had become a mere "whited sepulcher," fit only for the graveyard for dead religions. Christ and the Apostles opened up these two streams of the true religion, spirit and truth, and let them flow through the souls and lives of men, which led to the establishment of a church of both the spirit and the truth. Accordingly, the Apostles, as did Christ before them, emphasized both the spirit and the truth of the church. (See Acts 6:3; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 1:25; 2:2, 8, 20; 3:7; 5:8; 12:13; 13:1-13; 14:1, 15; 2 Cor. 3:6; 4:1-2; 11:10; 13:8; Gal. 1:6; 2:5, 14; 3:1; 5:5-6; 6:16-24; Eph. 2:18; 4:15, 21; 5:9, 18; 6:14; Phil. 3:3; 4:9; 1 Thes. 5:19-21; 2 Thes. 2:10-13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 4:1-4; 1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15; 4:4; 1 John 5:7; 3 John 3; 1 Pet. 1:22; etc.)

It is evident from the above that the spirit is not, as stated by Sabatier and indorsed by Professor Peabody, "a subterranean stream gushing up intermittently through breaches that become larger with the advancing years"; but it was a deep-flowing stream that filled both the

teaching of Christ and his Apostles and the New Testament church; and along with this spiritual stream there flows another stream, the stream of truth, which flowed through Christ and his Apostles into the New Testament church, making it a church of authority. Of course, there is no authority that inheres in the church itself by virtue of Apostolic Succession, but only the authority of the truth of Christ, which is the only thing that makes the church authoritative. Whenever the church loses the truth, it loses its authority. While Christ's truth does not consist of philosophic categories and doctrinal tenets, yet it was expressed in part outwardly in words and deeds, and embodied in his character, which makes it partly external, and its final seat of authority external. Too much emphasis cannot be put upon these two streams or phases of the church, spirit and truth; but to emphasize the one and neglect the other, as is done to-day, is contrary to both Christ and the Apostles. All efforts to divide the church along the lines of spirit and outward authority, as Professor Peabody attempts in his book, *The Church of the Spirit*, is contrary to Christ's and the Apostles' conception of the church. In fact, any effort to divorce spirit and truth, which Christ joined together, is anti-Christian. Outward form does not necessarily kill spirit, but gives it a means of expression, which is the life of spirit. In fact, spirit without outward forms leads to mysticism and confusion. The spiritualizing of everything in religion, as is done by Unitarians, Friends and Christian Scientists, is destructive of the true church of Christ, which is "in truth" as well as "in spirit," and has external forms, as well as inner spiritual values, for the expression of spirit.

The true church of the spirit has never had any existence apart from the church of the truth, or authority. To claim the manifestations of the spirit in the history of the organized church of authority as evidence of the continuity of the church of the spirit is to rob the institutional church of its soul. The spirit belongs to it as much as its outward forms. When Modernists go through the history of the church, picking out whatever suits their views, that is, only the spiritual doctrines and traditions, and leaving the dry bones of formulism to the institutional church, they do a great injustice to the institutional church. They can rightfully claim only those people and doctrines and traditions that reject all objective forms, and declare for a purely spiritual or subjective church, such as the Unitarians, Friends and Christian Scientists of to-day. A purely spiritual church is a will-o'-the-wisp that has had little real existence in the history of the Church. It is not the monotheism of Unitarians nor the mysticism of Friends that excludes them from full Christian fellowship so much as their rejection of all external authority and outward forms. Christ never rejected any sincere seeker after God; but he did say that true religion must be "in truth," authoritative, as well as "in spirit," and he indorsed and prescribed external forms for the expression of spirit. (See Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19; Mark 14:22-24; 16:15-16; etc.)

That the church might be spiritual in character and conformed to the truth, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the church and to lead the church into all truth. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came, and filled the church; and those, baptized on this day, received the gift of the Holy Spirit; and thereafter the Holy Spirit is

referred to as dwelling in and guiding the church. So the first church was a Spirit-filled and a Spirit-guided church, and the church to-day must also have the Holy Spirit, and be guided by the truth of the same to be a church of Christ. The presence, the indwelling and leadership of the Holy Spirit in the church is one of the mysteries of the Christian religion, but nevertheless a fact. There has been much speculation and theorizing on the way and sense in which the Holy Spirit dwells in and leads the church, which has disturbed and divided the church; and there is no hope of unity on any of these theories and doctrines, but all can unite upon the fact of His indwelling and leadership, which is sufficient for Christian unity. A church that does not possess the Holy Spirit, and is not led by the same in some real sense, cannot be a church of Christ. It may be a John-the-Baptist church, such as Paul found at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7), or it may be a social, ethical or religious society of some kind, of which the world is full; but without the presence and leadership of the Holy Spirit it cannot be a church of Christ, in which all Christians can unite. The report on the nature of the church in the Lausanne Conference emphasized the necessity of the indwelling and leadership of the Holy Spirit, and drew this conclusion from the same, "As there is but one Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, so there can be but one Church, holy, catholic, and apostolic." This one church is the reason for Christian unity. For further characteristics of this church see the Report in the Appendix, which shows a remarkable agreement along this line, and also records differences as to outward forms.

We come now to the consideration of the outward forms of the church of the New Testament, which identify it,

and are essential to Christian unity. They are so few and simple in comparison with the Jewish formulism of Christ's day and the elaborate forms of many churches to-day that many have been led to conclude that Christ gave no objective forms for the church; but a study of the New Testament church will reveal some outward forms such as creed, doctrine, sacraments, ordinances, orders, etc. The objective forms of the church, it is true, constitute disputed territory, where differences are many and strong; and for this reason most advocates of Christian unity avoid this realm; but these differences cannot be removed by ignoring them or declaring them of no importance. Any difference is important, when it becomes a barrier to unity; and many of these differences are great hindrances to Christian unity, and must be removed.

First, the question of creeds must be agreeably settled. The Conference recognized the necessity of a common confession of faith, which was one of the subjects studied and reported upon. This report was the agreeable surprise of the Conference. In the preliminary discussions the traditional creeds were insisted upon by many as essential, and a few were disposed to discard all such; but, when the report was drawn and received, it showed remarkable agreement. All recognized the value of the traditional creeds as witnesses and safeguards of the Christian Faith as contained in the Scriptures; but only the simple personal confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was held to be binding upon all. This report was written by Bishop Gore, a strong advocate of the traditional creeds, yet it shows broad toleration and provision for those who do not accept them as binding, which is a credit to the man and the Conference, and means much

for the cause of unity. The report declares for the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of faith and not any statement about Christ. This was the creed of the New Testament church. (See Matt. 16:16-18; Mark 8:27-29; John 11:27; 20:31; Acts 8:37, etc.)

However, some still think that this simple statement of faith is too brief, indefinite and broad for Christian unity; but surely they have not examined it closely. This simple yet profound creed requires a definite, specific and comprehensive faith,—faith in Jesus as *the* Christ, *the* Son of *the* living God; not *a* son of man, *a* Christ, or *a* Son of *a* God. This creed permits of easy elaboration, because it implies so much. First, being "*the* son of man," he is of all the sons of men the greatest; he is the perfect man. Second, being "*the* Christ," he is of all God's anointed ones, as prophet, priest and king, the greatest,—the world's Messiah and Saviour, with all its Messianic implications. Third, being "*the* Son of *the* living God," he is of all the sons of God uniquely divine, the only Son of God, with all its implications. Fourth, inasmuch as he is "*the* Son of *the* living God," there is the one and true living God with all its implications. All the later creeds of Christendom are implied deductions from the above simple, brief, comprehensive "faith once for all delivered to the saints"; but all such elaborations of this faith are unnecessary, and have proved to be divisive. The implications of this creed are inexhaustible, because it is comprehensive of all religious truth, and is universal in application, which makes it all-sufficient as a creed for Christian unity.

However, it is claimed that all, even Unitarians, accept this statement of faith, and it is, therefore, too inclusive

to-day, as it came to be in the early history of the church, and must be further defined and elaborated. It is somewhat flexible, and permits of one's individual Christology and theology to be read into it; but a creed for Christian unity must permit of some liberty of view. Besides, Christ asked no further statement of one's faith, and it should not be necessary to require more to-day than he required. The very fact that it is acceptable to all commends it as a creed for Christian unity. This creed, however, was never intended to be a fixed formulary, but a mere confession of faith. In fact, there are different statements of it in the New Testament. Anyone who insists upon the strict letter of this credal statement has not learned the true spirit of Christianity, which, though requiring a confession of the faith, grants broad liberty in the statement of the same. (2 Cor. 3:17.) This permits the use of any credal statement that is true to the above fundamental faith.

The next external of Christianity, and associated with creed, is doctrine; but this raises a subject that can hardly be mentioned in connection with Christian unity. There is a wide and strong prejudice against doctrine, and it is a tabooed question in many unity circles. It is claimed that doctrine is destructive of unity. It has been the bombshell that has shattered and divided the followers of Christ, or at least it has been productive of partisan debates and strifes, which have been largely responsible for many divisions in the church. The word "doctrine" has come to stand for a discussion of religious differences; but this is an acquired odium that does not belong to the true meaning of the word. It is a word of frequent use and good reputation in the New Testament. Christ was preëminently a teacher, and he taught a clear, definite

doctrine, of which he often spoke, and at which his hearers wondered. "The Jews, therefore, marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus, therefore, answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." You had as well try to divorce light from the sun as to separate Christ from his teaching. He was "the sun of righteousness,"—"the true light, coming into the world," radiating a pure spiritual light or doctrine that was of his very being. He came with a clear specific message of truth, a definite doctrine, which he preached with all the force and earnestness of his soul; and on going away he committed this doctrine to the Apostles under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to be preached and incorporated in the foundation of the church.

The Apostles were accordingly sticklers for "the sound doctrine," "sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine which is according to godliness"; and they pronounced anathemas upon everyone that "teacheth a different doctrine," or "preacheth any Gospel other than that which we preached unto you." This is not blatant dogmatism but strong insistence on an essential of Christianity, Christ's doctrine. A church without doctrine would have been a church without convictions—a spineless institution that never could have reached and influenced the world. Besides, doctrine largely determines what one is. Doctrine, taught, believed and practiced, forms character. Doctrine, however, has been overemphasized by some in the church, even to the neglect of character, which has brought doctrine into disrepute; but Jesus and the Apostles joined the two together in the

church. The popular tenet to-day, "It matters little what you believe and teach, but much what you are and do," was not the teaching of Christ and his Apostles. They insisted on orthodoxy in both doctrine and character as coordinate essentials of Christianity, the one productive of the other. Christian life and character are the result of Christian doctrine, the ethical and religious teaching of Christ, which Paul calls "the doctrine which is according to godliness." Christ did not teach a merely and purely ethical religion, but he gave a theological background and foundation for his ethics of life, which largely colors and determines Christian life and character. He taught a pure, lofty ethic and a clear, positive theology, which constituted his doctrine, which he claimed was not his own but his Father's; and he enjoined the same upon his disciples in his final commission.

This subject was treated in a general way in the Lausanne Conference under the subject of The Message of the Church, which the report declared to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This report is in every way commendable; and to this we wish to add only a statement of Paul, who gives a brief analytic statement of Christian doctrine. It was Paul that insisted most on "sound doctrine" and the true Gospel. He was the theologian of the Apostles, and was qualified in every way to speak on the subject of Christian doctrine. In his Letter to the Ephesians, which is his treatise on Christian unity, he summarizes Christian doctrine as follows: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." Note that there are seven one things, or great doctrinal truths

in this statement; namely, "one God and Father of all,"—the universal Fatherhood of God and its corollary, brotherhood of man; "one Spirit,"—the Holy Spirit; "one hope,"—the hope of eternal life; "one Lord,"—the Lord Jesus Christ; "one faith,"—faith in Christ the Son of God; "one baptism," which all the Christian world except the Unitarians and Friends, who teach spirit baptism only, interprets by their practice as water baptism; and "one body,"—the one united church of Christ, for the unity of which Paul gave the above doctrinal statement as the ultimate deposit of Christian doctrine; and with individual liberty of interpretation of the same there is no reason why all cannot unite upon these doctrines of the church. Not upon this statement, because it was not given as a doctrinal formulary; but it contains all the essential doctrines of the church, which all may state as they see fit, and unite upon these great doctrinal truths; and Jesus says, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or spoken by man." This will unite doctrinally all the sincere seekers after God.

Next, there are only two simple sacraments or ordinances, prescribed by Christ and the Apostles for the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Jewish worship had many sacraments and ordinances; but these were all fulfilled by Christ, and taken out of the way, which greatly simplified worship; however, Judaizing influences soon arose in the church, and reinstated many of these sacraments or others in their place, such as Confirmation, Penance, Ordination, Marriage, Extreme Unction, which were made sacraments in the church by the authority of the Pope; but only baptism and the Lord's Supper were given by Christ and the Apostles, and can, therefore, be considered as essential

for Christian unity; however, ordination and marriage are practiced by nearly all churches, and are held as essential by many. There were also strong advocates of the seven sacraments in the Lausanne Conference; but only the Lord's Supper and baptism were studied and reported. These two present serious difficulties and barriers to Christian unity; but, notwithstanding these difficulties, they were authorized by Christ and His Apostles, and unity could hardly be Christian without them. However, Christians have a sensitive conscience over the differences that have arisen over these two sacraments, which makes it unwise for unity to discuss the same; yet some common understanding and practice of these sacraments must be found. Many of these differences are over the place and design of baptism in the plan of salvation, which has been discussed in a preceding chapter. Such differences should not be allowed to interfere with Christian unity, because God will see to it that baptism is for the right purpose and in the proper place, without our settling these matters. The settlement of such questions belongs to God anyway; and much trouble in the church has been caused by people's presuming to take upon themselves prerogatives and functions that belong to the Lord alone. As to the form of baptism, there is but one Catholic baptism, which is the baptism commanded and practiced by Christ and the Apostles, which the great preponderance of evidence shows to be immersion in water. This is disputed, however, by some; but, when the greater barriers to unity are removed, the form of baptism will not stand in the way of Christian unity. This seemed to have been the sense of the Lausanne Conference, as the form of baptism was not discussed.

The Lord's Supper is the Sacrament of Christian com-

munion and fellowship, and has the greatest appeal for Christian unity. At the institution of this memorial feast Jesus prayed for the unity of all his disciples, and designed it to this end; and it has never lost its appeal for unity. It needs only to be emphasized more in Christian unity work. Its strong appeal for unity lies in its suggestiveness and association. It brings all to the foot of the cross, where enmity and sectarianism cannot be cherished, and into loving communion with Jesus, who died for the salvation and unity of all.

Notwithstanding the strong appeal of the Lord's Supper for unity, it has been made the occasion of divisions in the church. Christians have differed over its significance and observance. Insurmountable differences were frankly acknowledged in the Lausanne Conference, and so reported to the churches. In fact, the differences were so great that the delegates could not sit down together at the table of their common Lord in a union Communion service, which was attempted, but found to be impossible. These differences have arisen mainly over the belief in the corporeal and spiritual presence of Christ in the emblems and a valid ministry, which was the chief difference between the Catholics and Luther. Zwingli and Calvin also differed, Zwingli teaching that the bread and wine are only educative signs full of religious appeal, and Calvin teaching that they are more than signs, because they have the power to convey the Spirit of God. Besides these there have been many other differences of less importance among Christians over this feast of Christian worship, which have disturbed the church. Furthermore, this simple sacrament has suffered many changes by ecclesiastical authorities and tradition. The Catholic Eucharist

and Mass bear little resemblance to the original feast of the New Testament. The only hope of unity lies in the restoration of this sacrament to its New Testament meaning and practice, to which we now call attention.

In the New Testament church it was a feast, the Lord's Supper, and never referred to as an altar of sacrifice, as the Catholic Mass makes it. The Letter to the Hebrews makes it clear that all sacrifices were fulfilled in Christ, "who was offered once for all" on the cross, so there is, therefore, no further need of altar, priests and a repetition of Christ's sacrifice. The conclusions of Bishop Lightfoot from his scholarly study and investigation of the New Testament church still stand in spite of the determined efforts of the sacerdotalists to show otherwise, which are as follows:

"Above all the church has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe, or class, between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the divine head. To him he is immediately responsible, and from him directly he obtains pardon and draws strength. . . . No distinct traces of sacerdotalism are visible in the ages immediately after the Apostles. . . . Toward the close of the second century we discern the first germs appearing."

Peter's statement is just as conclusive. "Ye [Christians], as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Christ Jesus" (1 Pet. 2:5). This does away with every vestige of human priesthood in the church, and makes each "living stone" or member of the church his own officiating priest "through Jesus Christ, our great high priest,"—"the one mediator between God and man."

At first the Lord's Supper was a ceremonial rite in connection with the regular meal, but finally became a separate religious feast after the order of the Jewish Passover Feast. It was a memorial of Christ (Luke 22:19-20); a communion with Christ (1 Cor. 10:16-21); a sign and seal of God's New Covenant (Luke 22:16); a prophecy of Christ's and the kingdom's coming (vs. 20); and a means of spiritual grace and growth (John 6:41-59). It was the Lord's Table, to which all disciples were welcomed, "each examining himself." Anyone, therefore, that makes it a mere congregational feast and thus restricts its communion and fellowship diverts it from its original purpose of universal Christian fellowship. The only "close communion" spoken of in the New Testament is the close communion of a soul with Christ; and the only "open communion" is that of open hearts and lives to him.

While the report at Lausanne on the sacraments registered more differences than the other reports, and there was a feeling of having come up against insurmountable barriers, yet the report is encouraging, and goes far beyond what anyone had hoped. In fact, when you read the report, you wonder why with so much in common we cannot have unity on the sacraments, and you wonder more why we could not have union Communion service in the Conference, which was attempted, and found to be impossible. However, the real difficulties do not lie in the sacraments but in the ministry or priesthood; that is, in the question of valid administrators of the sacraments, which is indissolubly connected with the sacraments. So we must first find a solution of the problem of a valid ministry, which is the greatest barrier to universal unity, before we can have unity on the sacraments. This question

was discussed at length in the Conference, and the longest report of all was made upon the same; but the Conference adjourned without any solution of the problem; and the whole question was referred to the churches for further study with the hope and prayer that a satisfactory solution will eventually be found.

The hindering issue was Apostolic Succession, which must be discussed and settled on its merits, which the limited space of this chapter does not permit. Suffice it to say here that Apostolic Succession grew out of the Catholic perversion of the Lord's Supper from a feast to a sacrifice, which necessitated priests to serve the altar; and for the priests to be able to change the bread and wine into the literal flesh and blood of Christ required Apostolic Succession. As Bishop Lightfoot shows, the Presbyter became the priest and finally the successor to Peter. During this transition period there is a break in the succession, which is acknowledged by many advocates of Apostolic Succession. However, the real weakness of the claim does not lie in its continuity but in its superiority. Those that claim Apostolic Succession claim also a special grace conferred in the same, otherwise the former claim is worthless; but the superiority of its priesthood cannot be shown. The churches claiming Apostolic Succession have a high and worthy ministry; but in no respect is their ministry superior to the ministry of other churches; and, until their superiority in this respect is clearly established, their claim of Apostolic Succession will not be accepted. The compromise of having all nonconformist ministers submit to priestly ordination for the sake of the conscience of those that hold to Apostolic Succession, which has been advocated by some, was not mentioned at Lausanne, nor

was it suggested in the report. While the advocates of Apostolic Succession denied the *validity* of all other orders, they admitted the *efficacy* of these orders, and this was embodied in the report, which promises hope of unity. If a ministry is efficacious, what more is necessary? The only test that Jesus applied to his first ministers was, "By their fruits ye shall know them." If these other ministries have borne the good fruit of efficacy, is this not sufficient to establish the validity of the same? Until this barrier is removed in some way, there is no hope of unity between the sacerdotal and the nonsacerdotal churches.

But there is another form of sacerdotalism in most all churches, which was not mentioned in the Lausanne Conference except incidentally in the report on the sacraments in these words, "We are baptized by one Spirit into one body," which raises the question of church membership. There is more or less of sacerdotalism in all churches in the matter of church membership, which is a great barrier to Christian unity. Inasmuch as this subject was omitted at Lausanne, a fuller discussion is undertaken in this chapter.

The issue is stated in what is known as "open membership" and "close membership." It is a restriction of church membership by the form of baptism. Baptism by the proper form, immersion, is held by many as an essential condition of church membership, while others admit those that have been sprinkled or poured. While it is an issue only in immersionist bodies, yet it is a serious issue, and is a serious barrier to Christian unity.

The matter of admission into the church is a priestly function, performed by some one in almost all churches. Either the priest, the minister, an elder or some church

official stands at the door of the church to bar or admit members into the church according to the rules of that church for church membership. Such a priestly function, we affirm in this chapter, belongs to Jesus alone. John refers to Jesus as "He that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth"; and, in proof that this applies to church membership, see Acts 2:47, which states that "The Lord added to the church [or to them] those that were being saved." This takes church membership out of the hands of the church officials and members of the church, and places it in the hands of the Lord, and confines it to the saved, of whom the Lord is the judge, and before whom all stand or fall as members of the church. The conditions of church membership are, therefore, the same as the conditions of salvation; and the Lord is the judge of both, and adds to the church the saved. Thus, the Lord added the members to the Jerusalem church as they were saved, which is a pattern for all ages and places. But the churches to-day have taken this matter out of the hands of the Lord, and have instituted their own traditional formal reception and record of members, as follows: An invitation is given to come forward and receive the right hand of fellowship from the minister or members, and then their names are placed upon the official and authoritative church roll, no part of which reception and record is to be found in the New Testament; and besides it ignores and thereby displaces the Lord's reception and record of church members. No such invitation was ever given in an Apostolic church; nor was there such a right hand of fellowship (that of Gal. 2:9 was part of the dedication of Paul and Barnabas, who were already members of the church, to the ministry of the Gentiles, and had nothing

whatever to do with church membership); and, so far as we know, no roll of church members was kept by the Apostolic church, for the evident reason that the Lord did the adding, so no one else could know and keep the record. The numbering of disciples in the first of Acts is an estimate and not a record, as is shown by the word "about." The reception and record of members to-day may not be intended as a substitute for the Lord's addition of members, but it is without Scriptural command or precedent, and ignores the Lord's reception and record, and is a virtual displacement of the same. It cannot be claimed that they are received and recorded, because the Lord has added them to his church, for no one knows whom He has added. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." So, then, if we do not know who are the Lord's and whom He has added, why presume to know by a formal reception and record of church members? No man is capable of sitting in judgment on one's church membership any more than his salvation. "Who art thou that judgeth the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth." And all the ecclesiastical authorities in the world cannot put one either in or out of the church of the Lord.

When we thus decline to sit in judgment on church membership and refer the same to Jesus, who alone can open and shut the doors of the church (Rev. 3:7), and who alone can add to the church (Acts 2:47), we are true to Him as our great high priest and head of the church, and are in the fellowship of all that claim to be His; but, when we sit in judgment upon their claim of church membership by receiving or rejecting them from the fellowship of the church, we assume a knowledge and authority that we do not possess, and take action in a matter where we

cannot be sure of our decision, because we cannot be sure that they have acceptably complied with the conditions of church membership: faith, repentance and baptism. Even baptism, which is made the final test, must be "from the heart," which we cannot know; and the believing, penitent man that has not been immersed is merely imperfect in his obedience, and "stands or falls before his own Lord" and not before church officials. So, then, if we cannot be sure of the church membership of the immersed, how can we judge the unimmersed? The truth is, Jesus is the Judge and Mediator of both in the matter of church membership, and adds to His church the saved; and He never commissioned anyone to act for Him in this matter. Accordingly, when church officials pass upon the membership of either the immersed or unimmersed, they assume the rôle of mediating priest whether they so intend or not, and break fellowship with one class or the other.

But reply is made by those that stand thus at the entrance into the church that they are not there as mediating priests but as mere executives of Christ's conditions of church membership, so Christ, who prescribed these conditions, thereby excludes and admits into His church. But Christ did not prescribe any conditions of church membership. He prescribed the conditions of salvation, faith, repentance and baptism, after which "He adds to the church the saved"; but He never prescribed that the saved should come forward on the invitation of the minister, and by the right hand of fellowship be received into the church. In the matter of salvation the minister or evangelist has a commission to perform, that of preaching and baptizing; but in the matter of church membership,

which follows salvation, he has no commission. He has nothing whatever to do with this. So, then, why presume to receive or exclude from the church by the practice of either "open" or "close" membership? The Lord will add those that ought to be added, so, why take a responsibility and function that is not man's, and thereby appear in the rôle of judge and priest? But it is claimed that He adds only the baptized. Well, if He does, He will add the baptized without any action on the part of the minister or church, so why take action in a matter over which we have no jurisdiction and control? The church's reception of members is, therefore, an empty, unauthorized form that cannot affect the matter of church membership one way or the other, and places the minister in the false light of mediating priest, and breaks fellowship unnecessarily with many sincere followers of Christ. Why go out of the way thus to break fellowship with any follower of Christ by doing an unauthorized thing?

Since "open" and "close" membership, as preached and practiced by the churches to-day, are both contrary to the ideal for the church revealed in the New Testament, both should be declared out of order in any New Testament church. We have no right or authority to "open" or "close" the doors of the church upon any follower of Christ. This is the Lord's prerogative alone, and He adds and rejects whomsoever He wills. (Rom. 9:14-18.) But some one replies: "This is just 'open' membership under the disguise of leaving it to the Lord. Such a policy in the church would admit every professed follower of Christ." Admit them to what? Not to the church, because, as we have shown, the Lord alone can do this. To the work and worship of the church? Yes, but who would exclude

any follower of Christ from the work and worship of the church? All the followers of Christ are admitted to the work and worship of the church by all communions, which, after all, is all anyone can do. Our meetings are for work and worship; and we have nothing else to which we can admit them. As workers and worshipers together in any locality we may also keep a record of them as such with the understanding that church membership is a matter left entirely with the Lord and the individual worshiper, and that there is no official record kept of the church membership; and such a reception and record of the workers and worshipers of any locality will serve the same purpose as the official reception and record of church members. This leaves church membership where it belongs—with the Lord—and meets every practical need of the local church. In fact, this is all that anyone can consistently do, and all that the Apostolic church did. At no time and place did they formally and publicly receive members into the church, or expel any from church membership. It is true that Paul commanded Christians to "withdraw from those that walk disorderly," but this was a social ostracism rather than a religious excommunication. "Have no company with him." "With such a one not to eat, but admonish him as a brother." There was no formal dissolution of church membership any more than there was a formal reception, because both were beyond the authority of the church. They left both with Christ, the head of the church.

This position on church membership of practicing neither "open" nor "close" membership is consistent with the position of neither "open" nor "close" communion at the Lord's Supper. As we have shown, it is the Lord's table,

to which no one has the right to invite or bar; and it is for all Christians alike, who must examine themselves, and partake accordingly. Just so it is the Lord's church, into which and from which the Lord alone has the right to receive or reject. Fellowship in church membership must be as broad and inclusive as fellowship at the Lord's table.

Furthermore, this position is consistent with the New Testament conception of the local *ecclesia*, which, according to Jesus, consists of those, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," and according to Paul, of "all those that call upon the name of the Lord in every place." In the Apostolic church the local *ecclesia* was merely an assembly for Christian work and worship. This is the original meaning of the word, and is so used in the New Testament in many places. Accordingly, the only condition of membership in the same was to be a worker and worshiper in the name of Jesus. This did not mean, however, that all in the local body were saved, and in the spiritual body of Christ. In fact, there were some in the local body, such as Ananias, Sapphira, Simon the sorcerer, Demas, and the adulterer of 1 Cor. 5, Jezebel, etc., who were not in the spiritual body of Christ, to which the Lord adds only the saved. So, then, if the local *ecclesia* of the Apostolic church contained some that were not in the spiritual *ecclesia*, why cannot the local body to-day contain some who have not fulfilled all the conditions of membership in the spiritual body of Christ? There is no other view of the local *ecclesia* that can be harmonized with conditions in the churches at Corinth, Pergamum, Thyatira, etc. These were local *ecclesiæ* of Christ, but they evidently contained some not in Christ's spiritual body, because he adds only the saved

(Acts 2:47). So the local body is made up of both the saved and unsaved. No priest nor minister to-day would claim that everyone in his congregation is a saved person. In fact, they have doubts about many of them. They may claim that they have been saved from past sins by compliance with the conditions of salvation, faith, repentance and baptism, which enters them into the church; but of this they cannot be sure, because these conditions are subjective, "in the heart," and are known only by the candidate for church membership and the Lord. But it is claimed that those in the local body have at least *formally* complied with the conditions of church membership, that is, they have confessed their faith, shown evidences of repentance and have been baptized; and the same is claimed to be true of all churches mentioned in the New Testament. This is a mere inference based upon the silence of the New Testament on this point. It is not stated whether all in the local bodies had or had not complied with all the conditions of church membership. It seemed that John wanted to enforce rigidly strict conditions of membership on all professed followers of Christ (Mark 9:38-39), but Jesus was willing to work and worship with all that were not against him. If the local body is anything more or less than the workers and worshipers in the name of Jesus, the proof rests upon those that so hold. The fact is, the local body of disciples, according to Jesus and Paul, is made up of those "gathered in the name of Jesus," or "those that call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ"; and anyone that enforces other or stricter conditions of membership in the same does so on his own authority.

Furthermore, there is a mistaken idea in many churches

as to what body baptism enters one. Does it enter one into the local or the universal body of Christ? Is it a door into the local visible church or into Christ, his spiritual body? The advocates of "close membership" affirm the former, as is seen in the following quotation from F. D. Kershner, of Indianapolis:

"Baptism is a church ordinance. If properly administered, it qualifies one for church membership. Baptism, if formally correct, is the *sine qua non* of church membership; and church membership is the end, aim and purpose of baptism. By 'formal correctness' I mean immersion, of course. One can become a Christian, live the Christian life without being immersed, and therefore without being a member of the church; but immersion is absolutely essential to church membership. I regard the local congregation as the expression of the visible church in each community."

Doctor Kershner cites no Scripture in proof of this position, because there is no passage in the New Testament that can be so interpreted. On the contrary, Paul says, "We were all baptized into one body, both Jews and Greeks." The only body into which all Christians can be baptized is the universal spiritual body of Christ. The "We" of Paul's statement must include all to whom he wrote; namely, "the church of God which is at Corinth with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place," which is evidently the universal body of Christ. Again Paul says, we are "baptized into Christ,"—"the church, which is his body," which is His spiritual universal body. (See also Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12; etc.) Every other reference to baptism in the New Testament indicates the spiritual body of Christ, and not one the local. Baptism in the Great Commission has to do with the making of disciples and salvation, which is in His spiritual body.

Christ's own baptism was to "fulfill all righteousness" and not to identify him with any local group. Baptism on the day of Pentecost was "for the remission of sins" and not to put them into the local Jerusalem church; and in the case of the Ethiopian, Paul, Cornelius, Lydia, Philippian jailer, and many others there was no local church to be baptized into. By referring baptism to the local body, as the advocates of "close membership" do, all its spiritual significance is destroyed, and it becomes a mere empty form that identifies one with the local body; whereas the truth is, it identifies one with Christ, his spiritual body, and has no reference whatever to the local body. By referring baptism thus to the spiritual universal body of Christ, as the New Testament teaches, it has a greater significance and importance, and thereby removes "the open and close membership" issue from the local body, and enables all professed followers of Christ to come together for work and worship in his name, which is the first step toward Christian unity.

In conclusion, all who can work and worship together have common ground for the beginning of local unity; and with the unity problem locally solved universal unity will take care of itself. As to the relationship of each to Christ and salvation all stand or fall before a common Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ, in whose name all Christians work and worship, and should unite. Neither Christ nor the Apostles said or did anything to prevent all followers of Christ from working and worshipping together. Men have built traditional walls about the local visible body, and made terms of entrance into the same, which Jesus and the Apostles did not prescribe. They intended the local body to be broad enough to hold all

those "gathered in the name of Jesus" or who "call upon the name of the Lord." It was never intended to be an ecclesiastical authoritative body to act upon the orthodoxy, salvation and church membership of Christ's followers. The only thing that should bar one from the local body is inability to enter into the work and worship of the same; and all who can should be welcomed into the fellowship.

This brings us to the consideration of the form and content of Christian work and worship, necessary for unity. This has often given trouble in the church, and sometimes caused division. This problem was not discussed in the Lausanne Conference except as it was involved in the subjects of the ministry and the sacraments of the church. In the matter of Christian work there are few differences, in fact none that should interfere with Christian unity. All are committed to the essentiality of Christian missions, education, benevolence, social uplift, etc.; and these Christian causes must be incorporated in the united church; otherwise it could not be a church of Christ. The only difficulty in respect to these causes is, they have been denominationalized with great denominational institutions such as missionary societies, schools, orphanages, hospitals, etc., with their large property holdings, which constitute serious barriers to unity; however, when the time comes that they love unity more than their denomination, these denominational possessions will be gladly turned over to the united church; but denominational property will be the last and hardest barrier to remove.

Christian worship also involves serious and difficult barriers to unity. Primarily, the church is an institution

for worship, and unity of worship is the first object of Christian unity; but it is difficult to make the form and content of worship such as will be acceptable to all Christians. This involves a thorough study and full exposition of Christian worship, which can not be done in a brief treatise. (See author's book, *Christian Worship*.) Only a brief statement is attempted here. Jesus as High Priest established a new system of worship, or rather gave the norms out of which Christian worship as it is practised in the churches to-day has grown. There are marked differences in the form and content of the rituals of the various churches. All need to return to the pure and simple worship revealed in and through Christ. He was not a strict ritualist, and often turned away from the empty forms and ceremonies of the worship of that time; yet he worshiped freely with all of his day in the Temple and synagogues, by the seashore and upon the mountain top, or wherever he found a place of prayer, praise and study. Whenever it ceased to be a place of sincere worship, he denounced the hypocrites for their irreverence and sacrilege, and drove them from the Temple.

The only ritual for Christian worship that he prescribed was, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Christian worship must, therefore, be from the soul, subjective in nature, and conformed to truth, objective in form and expression. That is, Christian worship is both subjective and objective; a subjective feeling given an objective expression. Accordingly, the words that he used to express worship express both the inner and outer meaning of worship. For the one see *sebo* and *eusebeo*, and for the other see *proskuneo* and *latruo*. So Christian worship is not merely a subjective

feeling as the Quakers make it, but also has its outward forms of expression such as prayers, confessions, praise, study and devotion. However, Jesus gave no prescribed ritual for the expression of the emotions of worship, so there must be the largest individual and congregational liberty in the outward forms and content of worship. In fact, worship is largely an individual matter between God and the worshiper, so the form of worship should not be allowed to interfere with Christian unity. If one finds the assembly worship of such a nature that he can not profitably enter into it, he can worship God in the silence of his soul and express it in a form acceptable to Him. He should be able to rise above the imperfections and errors in the worship, and find God in all places of worship in the name of Jesus Christ. Sacerdotalists that insist on a special valid ministry can not enter into other worship, but all that believe in the priesthood of all Christians, and worship God through Jesus Christ alone can and should worship together. "Oh magnify Jehovah with me, and let us exalt his name together." This is the beginning point of Christian unity; and, when people begin to worship together, they will go on to a fuller unity in Christ.

But the question of the organization of such a local body, made up of Christian workers and worshipers, must also be settled. This question presented itself to the first Christians assembled in Jerusalem; and the church was organized as the needs arose, which is the only rule and precedent for the church to-day. They selected for officers "men of good report, full of Spirit and of wisdom," which qualifications Paul further elaborates in 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9, whom they appointed with fasting, prayer and the laying on of hands, as deacons and elders, or

bishops. Church organization and government has been and still is a great barrier to Christian unity. In the beginning the church was very simple in organization and democratic in form. Every word used in referring to members of the church, such as "disciples," "brethren," "fellow workers," "fellow citizens," etc., is a democratic word. All such classes and orders, as laity and clergy, bishops, priests and popes, were unknown in the Apostolic church; but gradually the church became more centralized and complex, until it became a great ecclesiastical system, headed by the Pope. All the reformers have endeavored to simplify and democratize church government and organization; but there still remains much of Roman ecclesiastical rule and organization in the church, which is a barrier to unity. Those that do not have dominating presbyters, bishops, priests or Pope have secretaries, superintendents and editors of church papers, who are often more dictatorial than any of the above. Furthermore, the elders of a local church often "lord it over God's heritage," and destroy all democracy in the church. While they are the bishops of the congregation, they are only the servant bishops (Mark 10:43-45; Acts 20:28); and the only authority that they possess is a delegated authority. A united church must be a thoroughly democratic church. Any organization, either Episcopal, Presbyterian or Congregational, that is loyal to Christ as its only head, and is democratic, is permissible according to the New Testament; so there should be the broadest liberty, consistent with loyalty to Christ and democracy, granted in church organization and government; and the form should not be allowed to interfere with Christian unity.

As to the name of the united church, any name that

honors and proclaims Christ as its head is permissible. The name will not be a difficult barrier to remove. In cases of union of churches they have gotten together on many of the Scriptural Catholic names for the church. While an acceptable name is an essential of the united church, it takes more than a name to identify the church. A church may wear all the Scriptural names of the church, and still not be a church of Christ. For further identification of the church see the Lausanne Conference report on The Nature of the Church, which is full and clear on the characteristics and essential marks of the church. The efforts of churches to distinguish themselves from other churches, claiming to be Christian, and to draw hard and fast lines between them and all other churches have widened the breaches of division, and fostered sectarianism. The idea of distinguishing between local bodies that claim to be Christian is not contained in the New Testament. The only lines drawn in the New Testament are the lines drawn between the world and the church, so anyone that undertakes to draw other lines does so on his own authority. The church at certain places is often spoken of, but never to distinguish it from other local bodies that claimed to be Christian, as is often done to-day. It is never spoken of *exclusively* but always *inclusively*; at times, as including such sects as the Nicolaitans. Jesus, in his letters to the seven churches in Asia, revealed to John, speaks of the faults and merits of these churches but not of their distinction and separateness from other bodies. There was no effort to distinguish the local Jewish body from the local Christian body, but to blend the two into one body. So churches to-day would greatly aid the cause of unity, if they would cease trying to distinguish

themselves from all other local bodies and thereby maintain their separateness, and would begin to identify themselves with all local bodies that profess to be Christian; and whatever is found to be lacking in the one may be supplied by union with the other. Each may be found to have something that the other needs, which only union can supply. If people meet in the name of Jesus, he has promised to be in their midst (Matt. 18:20); and, if they call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul wrote to them (1 Cor. 1:2); so, if they are recognized as disciples by Jesus and Paul, why should anyone else refuse to do the same, or hold himself separate and distinct from them? Instead, he should endeavor to unite with them. What is lost in formal orthodoxy may be gained in spiritual fruits, and vice versa; but there is no reason for losing either; and what is lost in authority may be gained in liberty.

In conclusion, the minimum of authority with the maximum of liberty for the church must be found as the basis of unity. While there are a few simple objective forms in the church of Christ that must be preserved, conformity must not be put above consecration; but both may exist together. In fact, true consecration requires something to conform to; and conformity is a dead, empty form without consecration. Furthermore, adoration of authority, even for the authority of Christ, must not be made a substitute for the imitation of Christ; nor must mere intellectual assent be accepted for Christian faith, which is an experienced conviction. When all come to accept the church as a church of both the spirit and the truth, and work and worship accordingly in the same, there will be unity in the church.

Christian unity is a unity of fellowship in work and wor-

ship. This unity begins in the local body, and reaches out into the universal body of Christ by every possible touch and contact. Some people think of Christian unity as a unity of Christian fellowship alone, but this is only one third of Christian unity. Others think of Christian unity as a unity of Christian worship alone; that is, all Christians of a community worshiping together under the same roof, but this is only a part of Christian unity. It is also a unity of Christian work,—a union of Christians to do the will of God, the work committed to the church, which consists of every good work such as moral righteousness, benevolence, education, missions, etc. Any unity that does not take in the whole realm of Christian work as one of its ends is not Christian. Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples that the world might believe on him, which is the work of Christian missions. Without Christian unity this task can never be done. The same is true of every other task of the church, benevolence, education, etc. All these tasks are too great for a divided church, as the past and present clearly show; and the future holds no hope except Christian unity. The doing of Christian work is so vital to the church that many have been led to the conclusion that the church of the future must be a united church, or it will be no church at all. When the church goes, Christianity will soon follow, so the supreme interest of Christianity to-day is the unity of the church. The church must, therefore, unite to save herself as well as Christianity as a whole; and only a united church can save the world.

CHAPTER VII

THE RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT OF CHRISTIAN UNITY



IN concluding this exposition of the essentials for Christian unity; namely, God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church, and on taking a retrospective review of what has been written on the same, the author feels, as doubtless the reader also, that these essentials have been buried beneath a mass of words about them, and they need to be brought to light again, divested of all comment and interpretation. They need to be seen in this concluding chapter in their simplicity and unity. These essentials are simple yet profound, and are few but inclusive of the whole of Christianity. Each one of the five is so vital and pregnant with Christianity that it is difficult to write briefly on them. Besides, so many nonessentials have attached themselves by implication and interpretation to these fundamentals, which must be lopped off, and so many differences have arisen among Christians over the interpretation and applications of these truths, that it is hard for one to treat them briefly; yet we hope in this concluding chapter to emerge from the theological mazes of the preceding chapters into the clear sunlight of these great truths with no fogs of interpretation and clouds of application to obscure our vision of these essentials of Christian unity. Let the reader, therefore, forget all that has been said about these fundamentals,—God, His Word, His Son,

His creature, man, and His church—and behold them in bold relief as the essentials for Christian unity. If they have not been rightly interpreted and applied by the author, let the reader place his own interpretation and application upon them, but join the author in proclaiming them as the essentials for Christian unity. With individual liberty of interpretation and application all should be able to unite upon these as the fundamentals for Christian unity. The great need is to know and accept these as the essential truths of Christianity, and unity will follow. They ought, we believe, to be taught in all the schools to the youth of the country; and with the youth indoctrinated with these fundamentals of Christianity the foundation for Christian unity would be laid; and through this common instruction and touch in the schools, Christians would be brought to understand each other better, and gradually be brought to think alike about these essential truths. In fact, modern youth is on record as opposed to all denominationalism and divisions in the church, and have taken a decided stand for a united church, which means much for the unity of the church of the future. They need only to be indoctrinated with the few great fundamentals of Christianity, which in their rejection of the traditions and doctrines of men and denominations they have overlooked, to effect real Christian unity. A few in breaking away from denominationalism have lost their religious bearings and standing, and are adrift on the religious seas, and need to see the great truths of religion. The truths of Christianity as taught by Jesus appeal to the strong and heroic in youth; and, when they are brought face to face with these great verities of religion, they will either accept them as most young people do, or like the young

man of the Scriptures will go away sorrowful because of the sacrifice and devotion which they require. Most of the old people to-day are confirmed denominationalists, and will never change; but the young people are free; and, if thoroughly committed to the cause of unity, they will be able to bring it about. Unfortunately the Lausanne Conference was largely made up of old men, which accounts for its slow progress toward unity. The few young men there were eager to go forward, and plead earnestly for the cause of unity.

But, in speaking thus pessimistically of the old people, we do not wish to be understood as ignoring or rejecting the past. No one who does not know and sympathize with the past, the history of divisions, is prepared to deal with the problem of unity for the future. There are three general cleavages of the church, Eastern Orthodox Catholic, Roman Catholic and Protestant; and the Protestant branch of the church is further subdivided into numerous divisions, each of which has had its historical cause and setting, which must be known and considered in the restoration of unity. In many cases the cause of division has been removed by time and the consequent change of views, so in such cases the differences are merely historical; however, the people often do not know this, and need a mutual exchange of views to find this out, and are often surprised to find that they have so much in common with people with whom their fathers differed so widely. To this end people of all communions need to be brought into close touch and mutual conference with each other that they may really know each other. The Lausanne Conference did much good along this line. Many, who had never before been in close touch with each other, were agreeably surprised to find so much in common.

However, there are still some people who are wedded to the past, honorable historic traditions of denominationalism, and are therefore hard to shake loose from differences that are thus rooted in the past. There were some of this class in almost every group represented in the Lausanne Conference, and they were unbending and immovable from their historic positions. In fact, tradition is more binding than truth with some people, and with such there is little hope of unity. It was of such traditionalists that Jesus spoke when he said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the commandments of men." Christian unity is thus tied to the past, and grows out of the past; and, as far as possible, must be in harmony with the past; but after all it is possible only among those that love the truth of Christ better than honorable tradition, and are willing to unite upon that alone. This does not mean that each must throw away his treasured traditions; they belong to him, and he can keep them, provided he does not try to impose them upon others. The past holds much truth, wisdom and experience that needs to be conserved in the unity of the future; but at the same time there is much that needs to be left behind, such as the outgrown customs and forms of the past and much that needs to be forgotten, especially, the bitterness, the prejudices, the offenses and alienations that have grown out of past divisions, nursed in unforgiving hearts, and passed on to succeeding generations. All such must be buried and forgotten before we can have Christian unity.

The past was a hindering factor in the Lausanne Conference. Tradition was on the throne of authority with many; while on the other hand others were looking more to the present and the future for the essentials of Christian

unity. The chief cleavage was between traditionalists and evolutionists; and no way of bringing these two extreme parties together was found. Their differences were fundamental and far-reaching; in fact, they seem to have little in common. The one holds to a fixed religion of the past; the other holds to a developing religion of the future. Accordingly, traditional Christianity is the religion of fixed forms; evolutionary Christianity is the religion of growing norms. Traditional Christianity is the religion of restricting authority; evolutionary Christianity is the religion of increasing freedom. Traditional Christianity is the religion of fixed dogmas; evolutionary Christianity is the religion of growing experience. Traditional Christianity is the religion of a completed institution; evolutionary Christianity is the religion of a coming kingdom. Traditional Christianity is the religion of mysticism, magic and superstition; evolutionary Christianity is the religion of reason, experience and faith. Traditional Christianity is the religion of ruling separate classes such as priests and people, clergy and laity; evolutionary Christianity is the religion of democratic equals. So evidently there can be little hope of unity between these two extremes in religion; their views are too divergent; in fact, they lead in opposite directions. These two parties at Lausanne were held together in the beginning by their common desire for Christian unity; but they were separated in the end, when the Eastern Orthodox members, by their protests, virtually withdrew from the Conference, and the Anglo-Catholics threatened to do so. Yet in spite of their wide differences they sang together, prayed together, studied together, worked together, talked together, ate together, and discussed all their differences together with-

out offense or an un-Christian word or deed, which showed that the spirit of the Conference was Christian and sufficient for Christian unity; but, unless these two extreme parties come toward each other, and find unity upon middle ground, there is no hope of unity between them. That is, unless the traditionalists will agree that religion is partly evolutionary, and the evolutionists will agree that religion is partly traditional, both of which are, we believe, true, there can be no unity between these two parties in the church.

But it is not necessary for other groups of Christians that do not have these great differences to wait until these two extreme groups agree. Let all unite that can unite, beginning where the differences are fewest and least important; and, closing up thus the small breaches, we can work up toward the larger unities. To this end unity must be first restored in the various denominational households, Methodists uniting with Methodists, Baptists with Baptists, Presbyterians with Presbyterians, Disciples with Disciples, etc.; and, when all the denominational families are united, the whole Protestant branch of the church will be in a position to unite. While there was little ground found for unity between the Protestant and Catholic branches of the church in the Lausanne Conference, there was a strong hope of unity within these groups, especially the Protestant. In fact, many groups of Protestants in Canada and India were reported as already united, or ready to unite; and many other groups were found hopeful of unity. Likewise, the majority of Protestants could be united, if they were wisely and sympathetically brought together into conference for this purpose. This is the open door and field for Christian unity work

to-day; and all advocates of unity should be alert to enter and active to cultivate for the cause of Christian unity. This generation of Christians has a great responsibility resting upon them to effect the unity of these groups; and in the light and wisdom of the past and present they can unite them, and thus do much for the cause of universal unity.

These unities, however, must be effected with due regard for the past as well as the future, because the differences that divide the church to-day have their roots in the past, and most of them come to us out of the past. In fact, we have few new differences; we have inherited most of them. While the sins of the fathers have been thus visited upon the children, we, the children of to-day, should not complain, because we doubtless would have done the same things, and, in fact, are guilty of the same by perpetuating these divisions that our fathers caused. It is our part to remove these differences; and they must be dealt with in the light of the past. Each division has its own historical setting and cause, and must be dealt with in the light of the same; but, if the light of history and Christian progress mean anything, we ought to be better able to deal with these differences than were our fathers.

Notwithstanding our inheritance of divisions, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the fathers,—especially those who have labored in behalf of Christian unity, and into whose labors we have entered. Beginning with Paul, who was the apostle of unity, there have been great advocates of unity, such as Tertullian, Augustus, Bernard, Calixtus, Baxter, Hall, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and the late Robert Gardiner, if one so recently passed to his reward, and whose work and spirit are still with us as

evidenced in the Lausanne Conference, can be numbered with those of the past. In fact, the spirit and work of all these men were felt in the Lausanne Conference. The Conference itself was due to their work and sacrifice, and it built upon the foundations which they laid. A well-deserved memorial of the late Robert Gardiner, to whose interest and work the Conference was largely due, was passed, and a memorial tablet was ordered erected to his memory. These pioneers in the cause of unity, who labored in the wilderness of divisions, died in the faith and for the cause of Christian unity; so then, seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us press on toward the realization of their hopes,—Christian unity,—“looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter” of the united church.

On the other hand, it is useless and unwise for the cause of unity to endeavor to fix the responsibility for the divisions of the past. In fact, all denominations have been more or less guilty, so a “holier-than-thou” attitude on the part of any is unbecoming and destructive of unity to-day. All the divisions in the church to-day come to us out of the past; and, whoever are the guilty ones, we to-day are not responsible for causing these divisions; but we are responsible for perpetuating the same; and, unless we do our utmost to end these divisions, we enter into the guilt of those that caused them. Whatever are the justifications of these divisions in the past, they can hardly be justified to-day; and, there are few apologists for divisions to-day. All deplore the divided condition of the church, and look upon unity as “a consummation devoutly to be desired”; but there are few active workers in behalf of unity. All Christians desire unity, but there are few that

are willing to help bring it about. They were born into a divided church, have never known anything else, and are content to drift along at ease in their separate denominations. Besides, denominationalism is old and respectable, and has become strong and powerful in modern life. Christians to-day need to be convinced of the sinfulness of divisions, and bring forth fruits worthy of the cause of Christian unity. Paul places divisions in the class of the unspeakable sins of the flesh; and not until Christians realize the great sinfulness of divisions will they endeavor to remove this blot from the church. The open scandal of the church to-day is its divisions; and the shame of the same ought to put the church in sackcloth and ashes. All Christians need to pray the prayer of the Publican, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner" against the unity of the church of Christ, and go up to the house of the Lord to pray and work for Christian unity. This was done at Lausanne in a penitential service, which was the most helpful meeting of the Conference.

While we inherited our divisions from the past, we inherited also a rich heritage of faith, good works, zeal, wisdom, loyalty, sacrifice and service. In fact, excepting divisions, the church has a glorious history of achievement; and this rich inheritance must be conserved in the unity of the future. Any reformer or unity worker that breaks with the church of the past is no friend of unity, because the church of to-day is a product of the church of the past, and the same will be true of the church of the future. Even our ideals and revelations for the most part come to us out of the past. People to-day who are looking for new ideals and revelations as a basis for Christian unity are false advocates of unity, and will only add to

the confusion in the church. The only hope for unity is a return to and a restoration of the ideals and essentials, revealed by Jesus Christ in the New Testament, which we have found to be God, His word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church. Broadly speaking, these are the fundamentals of Christianity, and constitute the foundation for Christian unity; and they come to us out of the past, and point the way to a reunited church of the future.

The *prospect* of Christian unity is more promising than the *retrospect* of the same. The past thousand years of the church's history has been the period of divisions; but the winds of divisive doctrines, individualism and sectarianism have about spent themselves; and the tides are turning back toward unity,—strong, deep and universal, which gives promise of a reunited church. (There was a tidal wave for unity started at Lausanne that will, we believe, never be turned back.) In the past the advocates of unity have been lone, prophetic, heroic voices, crying out in the wilderness of divisions for a united church; but to-day the voices for unity are numerous in every communion; however, there remains much to be done before unity can come. There are sectarian hills of opposition to be leveled down, and low valleys of indifference to be exalted, before the Lord's highway is ready for the marching hosts of a united church. As bright as the prospect of unity is, it is mere blind optimism that fails or refuses to see the many barriers to unity, which must be removed before Christian unity can come. It is, therefore, wise to look well into the hindrances to unity.

The first great hindrance to unity is individualism, which is one of the evil results of Protestantism. The emphasis of individual freedom by the Protestant re-

formers resulted in extreme individualism and consequent divisions in the church. The church must be free, but Christian unity is a dear price to pay for freedom. As precious and valuable as religious freedom is, it is nowhere put in a New Testament statement of the essentials of Christianity. The individual liberty that Paul claimed in theory is limited in practice by the conscience of the weak brother; that is, for the sake of the weak brother in particular and the unity of the church in general (1 Cor. 8-10). The freedom of the individual must be sacrificed for the good of the social whole. This seems to retard progress with the conscience of the weak, and holds back the strong; but the individual can progress only as the social whole progresses, so the necessity of preserving the unity of the social whole. Even in Paul's plea for freedom from the law of Moses in the Galatian Letter he affirms the supremacy of love and service over freedom for the sake of unity (Gal. 5:13-15). Protestants have had a supersensitive conscience on freedom, which has been destructive of unity. The church is learning, however, how to be both free and united. Paul endeavors to define the scope and application of Christian liberty so as to insure Christian unity, and he shows that the connecting link between the two is Christian loyalty. Christian loyalty has to do with the essentials of Christianity, which we have found to be God, His Word, His Son, His creature, man, and His church. On the other hand, Christian liberty has to do with the nonessentials of Christianity, which must be sacrificed for the sake of unity. Christian unity cannot be without the broadest liberty that Christian loyalty will permit. The Catholic Church has unity without liberty; and the Protestant Church has liberty without

unity; but the Apostolic church had unity with liberty, which was realized and maintained through loyalty, which is the ideal for the church to-day.

Next, religious differences constitute another great barrier to unity. Many of these are intellectual, which, some think, can never be removed; but it has been the contention of this book that, if all cannot be brought to think alike about everything in religion, they can at least be brought into sufficient agreement on the few great fundamentals of Christianity to insure Christian unity, which does not require intellectual uniformity. God, His Word, His Son, Jesus Christ, His creature, man, and His church are the great verities of Christianity, and constitute the foundation for Christian unity; and there is already a remarkable unity upon these; and, when these great agreements are kept in mind, this will help to do away with all minor differences that hinder Christian unity. If these great fundamentals could be indelibly stamped upon the minds and hearts of all Christians, as the New Covenant proposes (Heb. 8:8-13), all would be slowly but surely brought together and into unity upon the same; and all minor differences would be forgotten, or held as nonessentials and private opinions.

Also there are some spiritual differences that hinder Christian unity. These differences have grown out of the spiritual conditions and culture of the various individuals and communions. Some Christians have had better advantages and capacities for Christian culture than others; and some have cultivated one side of their soul to the neglect of another, which differences of culture and temperament make Christian unity difficult. Furthermore, each denomination has its own distinctive ritual, doctrine

and system of Christian culture, which has produced different types of Christians, who are hard to unite in one body. For instance, an Episcopalian, reared in the spiritual atmosphere of a formal worship, finds it difficult to pass into the more Puritanic communions, and vice versa; and, when you attempt to unite whole bodies with such spiritual differences, it will be difficult to fuse them into one harmonious whole. The only way to do so is by Christian forbearance, charity and helpfulness. "Ye that are spiritual restore such a one," is Paul's exhortation; and, if the strong help the weak, they will soon come together. Christ's Golden Rule and Paul's teaching on the weak brother, if followed, will do away with all spiritual differences that hinder Christian unity.

Another hindrance to Christian unity is a misunderstanding of those from whom we are separated. We often misunderstand each other because of different terms used to express the same thing. We mean the same thing often, but speak a different religious language to express it. We have the same feelings and convictions, but express them differently. There is no cure for misunderstanding but close sympathetic touch and contact with each other, which needs to be cultivated in every way possible. Denominational isolation breeds suspicion and alienation. We always seem to be farthest away from those that we know the least about; and the nearer we come to people and the more that we know about them, the more we find in common with them. Some one has compared it to seeing people in a fog. When we see them at a distance, they appear to be surrounded by a dense fog; but, when we come near them, the fog seems to fade away. Much of our religious misunderstanding of people is due to our

beholding them at a distance. Herein lay the greatest value of the Lausanne Conference. It brought Christians into close touch and acquaintance.

Another great hindrance to Christian unity, and perhaps the greatest, is the sectarian spirit, which is deeply embedded in the church. It is active in some; and, while it is passive in most Christians, it is easily aroused in all. It is a part of our religious inheritance, which has been cultivated through the centuries of division, and transmitted from father to son, until it has become a religious instinct with most people. It lies buried in our subconscious natures, and has much to do with the shaping and forming of our religious lives. While we are not ancestral worshipers, we are greatly influenced by our religious training and environment. This sectarian spirit must be uprooted and cast out of the church, because it is inimical and destructive of Christian unity. It will doubtless take much time to eradicate sectarianism from the hearts of Christians, but it must be done before Christian unity can find its way into the church. Sectarian feelings constitute a greater barrier to unity than religious differences, because sectarian feelings have a stronger hold and influence upon people than religious convictions. However, sectarian prejudice is slowly but surely passing away with the years, which means much for the cause of unity.

Furthermore, the sectarian vision and conception of the church stands in the way of Christian unity. Whenever people think of the church, they think of the sectarian units of the same. All must be brought to think and see the universal church of Christ, which is greater and more powerful than all its sectarian units. People will never go farther than they can see, so all need to look beyond the

sectarian walls that divide the churches to the broad catholic united church that encompasses the earth. Those at Lausanne had a vision of this church, which will carry them far toward the same.

Another great hindrance to unity is established denominationalism with all its great organized machinery and rich possessions. Denominational traditions, machinery and property will be found to be the hardest and last barrier to be removed. It seems to be the only barrier to unity in the mission fields to-day; and these churches are clamoring for independence from denominational control that they may have one united church. The representatives from the mission fields in the Lausanne Conference were the strongest advocates of unity; and they openly affirmed that, if the denominations would take their hands off the mission churches, they would solve the unity problem. No one in the Conference will ever forget the pleas of these missionaries for a native indigenous church that they might have a united church; but these pleas were received with deaf ears by denominational leaders. The plea of the Bishop of Dornakal to this end was even omitted from the published minutes of the Conference by the denominational editor of the same; but it can never be erased from the minds and hearts of those who heard it; and the great applause, given at the close of its delivery by the majority of those present, indicated its strength, and insures its final victory. The denominations are fighting a losing battle on the mission fields; and, unless they remove themselves as a barrier to unity there, they will lose their hold on these churches. In fact, they have already about lost their influence with many mission churches, and they are fast losing their hold on the home churches, as is seen in the many community undenomi-

national churches. Still the denominations are strongly intrenched in the hearts and lives of the people, and their influence was strongly felt in the Lausanne Conference. In fact, the representatives were appointed by the denominations, so many of them were strong denominationalists, and were more interested in their respective denominations than in Christian unity. Others were interested in unity, but on account of denominational ties and obligations were not free to speak and act for the best interest of unity. So the denominations are still a great hindrance to the cause of Christian unity. The Saviour's question to Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" will have to be repeated over and over, until the heart of the church is divorced from the denominations, and centered upon one united church. Denominationalism with all its possessions is the price of Christian unity, and many are not yet willing to pay the price. As expressed recently by the Lord Bishop of London, "Christ wanted a united church, but I do not feel competent to drop the beliefs of my ancient predecessors." Many are thus wedded to denominationalism; and, until they are divorced from the same, there is little hope of unity. All must rise above the love of denominations to the love of the one universal united church.

However, as many and as great as the hindrances to Christian unity are, there are nevertheless many evidences of their passing and the coming of Christian unity. To one who is disposed to be pessimistic, however, there are sufficient grounds for discouragement; and, on the other hand, to one who is inclined to be optimistic there is bright hope of unity. There are many things to brighten and strengthen this hope of unity; namely, the many organizations for the promotion of Christian unity in

nearly all denominations, conference instead of controversy, tolerance instead of intolerance, interest instead of indifference and enmity to unity, thinking, praying, speaking and working for unity instead of opposing it. If all the signs of unity on the religious horizon are to be believed, the unity for which Jesus prayed, and Paul worked, is slowly but surely coming. This is not a mere passing dream of the black closing night, but a vision of the red opening dawn.

The Lausanne Conference was a sure sign of the coming of Christian unity. While few visible results were accomplished, a beginning at least was made; and all present felt that it was a good beginning. It was the first concerted action for unity since the church divided, and was the nearest to an ecumenical conference since the days of the Apostles. In purpose and personnel it was the greatest meeting since the day of Pentecost; and there were many things that suggested the day of Pentecost; namely, the presence of representatives of all nations and races, the the multiplicity and jargon of languages, yet through interpreters all heard in their own tongues, and the asking and answering of the question, "What meaneth this?" Peter addressed himself to this question on the day of Pentecost; and many have essayed to answer the same with respect to the Lausanne Conference. Peter gave the meaning of the day of Pentecost in the light of the past and present; and this alone can be done with respect to the Lausanne Conference; that is, no one knows its meaning with respect to the future. It may mean much or little for the future of Christian unity, which remains to be seen; but it has a sure meaning with respect to the past and present, which let us notice.

In the first place, it showed the great progress of the

church through the centuries from its small beginning on the day of Pentecost with one hundred and twenty members to an innumerable host that covers the earth. All present were made to realize as never before that the church is a big institution. Most of us live in a little sectarian church, and necessarily have a small conception of the church; but the Lausanne Conference lifted us out of narrow denominational borders, and gave us a vision of the church universal in its vast reaches and broad domains. The church is indeed a big institution; but on account of its divisions it is a weak institution; and this Conference was an effort to restore its lost power by a union of its forces.

In the second place, the Lausanne Conference showed that there is a deep and widespread interest in Christian unity. In fact, practically all are interested. The Bishop of Gloucester intimated in his address that the Baptists are not interested, which was denied and resented by the Baptists present. Even the Roman Catholic Church had its unofficial representatives in the gallery of the Conference, and their papers since have had much to say on the subject of unity. Some communions are more interested than others; but all are more or less interested, and working for unity. The young in all churches are more interested than the old, which is a hopeful sign for the future. The missionaries in every denomination are the most interested. Every missionary at Lausanne from the foreign field was aflame with zeal and passion for unity, declaring it to be a necessity on the foreign field; and, unless the home churches provided the way for Christian unity, the mission churches would rise up, and enter into unity themselves. It is, therefore, up to the home churches either to lead or to get out of the way of unity on the foreign fields. They have no interest in our Western denominationalism;

and, unless we can take to them a Christianity that permits them to unite with all other Christians there, they will have nothing to do with us. There is more truth than irony in the words of the Archbishop of Upsala, commenting on the stand of the missionaries in the Lausanne Conference for Christian unity, "In the near future the Christian church in the Far East and India will telephone us in Europe and America and say, 'If you continue with your old and foolish divisions, we had better send missionaries to you.' "

Furthermore, this conference showed that Christians to-day can meet and discuss their differences without being un-Christian in spirit and conduct. This has not been true in the past. Usually they have debated, wrangled, quarreled, fought and sometimes killed each other. Only a few miles from where this conference was held stands the monument to Servetus, who was burned for religious differences; and not far from here Luther, in speaking of those who differed from him, said, "Kill them like dogs." We have come a long way in Christian spirit, conduct and toleration since those days. In the Lausanne Conference there was an honest, frank statement and discussion of differences without any dodging or compromising, and often interest and feeling ran high; yet there was not a single un-Christian word or act toward those holding different views. This was the Spirit of Christ; and His Spirit will finally unite all that follow His leading.

This conference showed also that Christians to-day can trust each other. After a long and intense discussion of the question of creed for the united church between Bishop Gore and Dr. Peter Ainslie, Doctor Ainslie left the writing of the report entirely with Bishop Gore, trusting him

to make the report such that Disciples and all others not accepting the authority of the historical traditional creeds could indorse the report, which he did. Suspicion and distrust have been fertile causes of alienation and division in the past; and, when we all reach the point where we can trust each other, and show ourselves worthy to be trusted, Christian unity will not be far off. Suspicion and distrust are born largely of ignorance of each other. When Christians are brought into close touch and fellowship with each other as they were in this conference, a better and more sympathetic understanding of each other results, which means much for unity. Thus many differences are found to be imaginary or insignificant.

Finally, this conference showed the status quo of Christian unity to-day. In the first place, it brought out the important differences and the real barriers to unity. These were found to be other than what many had thought. Differences of creeds and ordinances, which many had thought of as the greatest barriers to unity, were overshadowed by the questions of authority in religion, Apostolic Succession, church traditions, denominational loyalty, the nature of the church, whether an organization or an organism, the nature of the sacraments, whether real or mystical, etc. No solution of these differences was found; and these together with many other minor differences were passed on to the churches for their earnest study and prayerful consideration. While many great differences and impassable barriers to unity were found, yet as many or more great essential agreements were also found; in fact, more than anyone had hoped for. These were more than were stated in the brief reports and findings of the conference. Many were taken for granted as the founda-

tion of the conference and passed without discussion, such as faith in God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, man's need of salvation here and hereafter, the essentiality of the church, etc. A reading of the reports of the conference will show also a surprising agreement on many of the questions discussed, which is promising and encouraging for the cause of Christian unity.

However, notwithstanding the many great essential agreements that were found this conference showed that we are not yet ready for Christian unity. There remain "mountains and hills to be brought low and valleys to be filled" before the highway of the Lord is ready for the marching hosts of a united church.

In the meantime all must think unity, feel unity, plan unity, expect unity and practice unity in every possible way. Unity must become such a vital part of our religion that it will work itself out in our lives and institutions. It may never come in just the form and way that we expect and wish; but sooner or later in some form and way, pleasing to God, it will come. We do not know the form, the way, the day nor the hour; but we confidently look forward to the time when all God's people shall be one,—“one shepherd and one flock.”

We are sure, however, of some negative things that we have learned about the coming of Christian unity, which need to be mentioned, and are expressed by Mr. Shaw in the following:

“Christian union will not come by command or on demand; it will not be tricked into being by words, it stands at the end of no logician's proposition, it will yield to no orator's figure, it will be the finding of no philosopher, it punctuates no scheme, it awaits at the end of no preacher's

sermon, no author's book, no council's sitting, no parliament's ruling, no squeaking idiot's machinations. Christian union will be an answered prayer, the by-product of Christian living."

We quote further along this line from Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, with which we close:

"But the reunion of Christendom is not coming in a day, nor is the result of any adroitly devised scheme. The men who rush up and down the world exploiting plausible programs for bringing separated communities together, are not the men who are doing most to put an end to our regrettable divisions. It is not by propositions and compromises that the mighty miracle is to be wrought, but by the baptism of the human heart into a nobler spirit, and a fuller entrance on the part of Christian people into the thought and life of God. Before we have Church union we must all go deeper and rise higher. . . . Unity is a growth and not a manufactured product. Growths cannot be forced without deranging the processes of life. Forced reunions result in fresh divisions. The churches cannot be welded together by the hammers of our flaming ecclesiastical statesmen. They must be permitted to grow together. . . . During the last fifty years the churches have been growing together. Much of the bitterness and belligerency has already disappeared. Open hostility has well nigh ceased in all communities in which the people have emerged from the stone age. In larger sections of the Christian world the various communions are at present going their several ways, no longer caring to fight one another, but not quite prepared to love one another. We have the quietude of indifference, but not the full-toned harmony of consenting minds. But here and there are signs of a new era. It is daybreak in many lands. The principle of denominational comity is receiving a widening recognition, and coöperation is being extended over larger fields. Federation on a limited scale has already passed from the realm of hope into that of fact, while a few audacious spirits even dare to dream of an organic union that shall take in the entire Protestant world. The young men are seeing visions, and the old men are dreaming dreams, and some beautiful thing will some day come to pass."

APPENDIX

REPORTS OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER AT LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND AUGUST 3 TO 21, 1927

PREAMBLE

Unanimously adopted by the full Conference
August 20, 1927

WE, representatives of many Christian Communions throughout the world, united in the common confession of faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, believing that the Spirit of God is with us, are assembled to consider the things wherein we agree and the things wherein we differ. We now receive the following series of reports as containing subject matter for the consideration of our respective Churches in their common search for unity.

This is a Conference summoned to consider matters of Faith and Order. It is emphatically *not* attempting to define the conditions of future reunion. Its object is to register the apparent level of fundamental agreements within the Conference and the grave points of disagreements remaining; also to suggest certain lines of thought which may in the future tend to a fuller measure of agreement.

Each subject on the agenda was first discussed in plenary session. It was then committed to one of the sections, of more than one hundred members each, into which the whole Conference was divided. The report, after full discussion in sub-sections, was finally drawn up and adopted unanimously or by a large majority vote by the section to which it had been committed. It was twice presented for further discussion to a plenary session of the Conference when it was referred to the Churches in its present form.

Though we recognize the reports to be neither exhaustive nor in all details satisfactory to every member of the Conference,

we submit them to the Churches for that deliberate consideration which could not be given in the brief period of our sessions. We thank God and rejoice over agreements reached; upon our agreements we build. Where the reports record differences, we call upon the Christian world to an earnest reconsideration of the conflicting opinions now held, and a strenuous endeavor to reach the truth as it is in God's mind, which should be the foundation of the Church's unity.

REPORT OF SECTION I

Unanimously adopted by the full Conference
August 20, 1927

THE CALL TO UNITY

God wills unity. Our presence in this Conference bears testimony to our desire to bend our wills to His. However we may justify the beginnings of disunion, we lament its continuance and henceforth must labor, in penitence and faith, to build up our broken walls.

God's Spirit has been in the midst of us. It was He who called us hither. His presence has been manifest in our worship, our deliberations and our whole fellowship. He has discovered us to one another. He has enlarged our horizons, quickened our understanding, and enlivened our hope. We have dared and God has justified our daring. We can never be the same again. Our deep thankfulness must find expression in sustained endeavor to share the visions vouchsafed us here with those smaller home groups where our lot is cast.

More than half the world is waiting for the Gospel. At home and abroad sad multitudes are turning away in bewilderment from the Church because of its corporate feebleness. Our missions count that as a necessity which we are inclined to look on as a luxury. Already the mission field is impatiently revolting from the divisions of the Western Church to make bold adventure for unity in its own right. We of the Churches represented in this Conference cannot allow our spiritual children to outpace us. We with them must gird ourselves to the task, the early beginnings of which God has so richly blessed, and labor side by side until our common goal is reached.

Some of us, pioneers in this undertaking, have grown old in our search for unity. It is to youth that we look to lift the torch on high. We men have carried it too much alone through many years. The women henceforth should be accorded their share

of responsibility. And so the whole Church will be enabled to do that which no section can hope to perform.

It was God's clear call that gathered us. With faith stimulated by His guidance to us here, we move forward.

REPORT OF SECTION II

Received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 19, 1927

THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD— THE GOSPEL

The message of the Church to the world is and must always remain the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is the joyful message of redemption, both here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful man in Jesus Christ.

The world was prepared for the coming of Christ through the activities of God's Spirit in all humanity, but especially in His revelation as given in the Old Testament; and in the fullness of time the eternal Word of God became incarnate, and was made man, Jesus Christ, the son of God and the son of Man, full of grace and truth.

Through His life and teaching, His call to repentance, His proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of judgment, His suffering and death, His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and by the mission of the Holy Spirit, He has brought to us forgiveness of sins, and has revealed the fullness of the living God, and His boundless love toward us. By the appeal of that love, shown in its completeness on the Cross, He summons us to the new life of faith, self-sacrifice, and devotion to His service and the service of men.

Jesus Christ, as the crucified and the living One, as Saviour and Lord, is also the center of the world-wide Gospel of the Apostles and the Church. Because He Himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church to the world. It is more than a philosophical theory; more than a theological system; more than a program for material betterment. The Gospel is rather the gift of a new world from God to this old world of sin and death; still more, it is the victory over sin and death, the revelation of eternal life in Him who has knit together the whole family in heaven and on earth in the communion of saints, united in the fellowship of service, of prayer, and of praise.

The Gospel is the prophetic call to sinful man to turn to God, the joyful tidings of justification and of sanctification to those

who believe in Christ. It is the comfort of those who suffer; to those who are bound, it is the assurance of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The Gospel brings peace and joy to the heart, and produces in men self-denial, readiness for brotherly service, and compassionate love. It offers the supreme goal for the aspirations of youth, strength to the toiler, rest to the weary, and the crown of life to the martyr.

The Gospel is the sure source of power for social regeneration. It proclaims the only way by which humanity can escape from those class and race hatreds which devastate society at present into the enjoyment of national well-being and international friendship and peace. It is also a gracious invitation to the non-Christian world, East and West, to enter into the joy of the living Lord.

Sympathizing with the anguish of our generation, with its longing for intellectual sincerity, social justice and spiritual inspiration, the Church in the eternal Gospel meets the needs and fulfills the God-given aspirations of the modern world. Consequently, as in the past, so also in the present, the Gospel is the only way of salvation. Thus, through His Church, the living Christ still says to men, "Come unto me! . . . He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

REPORT OF SECTION III

Received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 19, 1927

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

God, who has given us the Gospel for the salvation of the world, has appointed His Church to witness by life and word to its redeeming power. The Church of the Living God is constituted by His own will, not by the will or consent or beliefs of men whether as individuals or as societies, though He uses the will of men as His instrument. Of this Church Jesus Christ is the Head, the Holy Spirit its continuing life.

The Church as the communion of believers in Christ Jesus is, according to the New Testament, the people of the New Covenant; the Body of Christ; and the Temple of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.

The Church is God's chosen instrument by which Christ,

through the Holy Spirit, reconciles men to God through faith, bringing their wills into subjection to His sovereignty, sanctifying them through the means of grace, and uniting them in love and service to be His witnesses and fellow workers in the extension of His rule on earth until His Kingdom come in glory.

As there is but one Christ, and one life in Him, and one Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, so there is and can be but one Church, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

The Church on earth possesses certain characteristics whereby it can be known of men. These have been, since the days of the Apostles, at least the following:

1. The possession and acknowledgment of the Word of God as given in Holy Scripture and interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the individual.¹

2. The profession of faith in God as He is incarnate and revealed in Christ.

3. The acceptance of Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature.

4. The observance of the Sacraments.

5. A ministry for the pastoral office, the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments.

6. A fellowship in prayer, in worship, in all the means of grace, in the pursuit of holiness, and in the service of man.

As to the extent and manner in which the Church thus described finds expression in the existing Churches, we differ. Our differences chiefly concern:

1. The nature of the Church visible and the Church invisible, their relation to each other, and the number of those who are included in each.²

¹Some hold that this interpretation is given through the tradition of the Church; others through the immediate witness of the Spirit to the heart and conscience of believers; others through both combined.

²For instance:

1. Some hold that the invisible Church is wholly in heaven; others include in it all true believers on earth, whether contained in any organization or not.

2. Some hold that the visible expression of the Church was determined by Christ Himself and is therefore unchangeable; others that the one Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit may express itself in varying forms.

3. Some hold that one or other of the existing Churches is the only true Church; others that the Church as we have described it is to be found in some or all of the existing communions taken together.

4. Some, while recognizing other Christian bodies as Churches, are persuaded that in the providence of God and by the teaching of history a particular form of ministry has been shown to be necessary to the best welfare of the Church; others hold that no one form of organization is inherently preferable; still others, that no organization is necessary.

2. The significance of our divisions past and present.³

Whatever our views on these points, we are convinced that it is the will of Christ that the one life of the one body should be manifest to the world. To commend the Gospel to doubting, sinful and bewildered men, a united witness is necessary. We therefore urge most earnestly that all Christians, in fulfillment of our Saviour's prayer that His disciples may be one, reconsecrate themselves to God, that by the help of His Spirit the body of Christ may be built up, its members united in faith and love, and existing obstacles to the manifestation of their unity in Christ may be removed; that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him.

We join in the prayer that the time may be hastened when in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

REPORT OF SECTION IV

As drafted by Bishop Gore

THE CHURCH'S COMMON CONFESSION OF FAITH

We, members of the Conference on Faith and Order, coming from all parts of the world, in order to bring the different churches together, have with deep gratitude to God found ourselves united in common worship, adoration and prayer, in God our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

We are united in the Christian Faith which is contained in the Holy Scriptures and is witness to and safeguarded in the ecumenical creed, called the Nicene, and in the Apostles' Creed, which Faith has been continuously confirmed in the spiritual experience of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is understood that the ways in which these creeds may be used shall be determined by the competent authority in each Church. It is understood also that the several churches will continue to make free use of such special Confessions as they possess.

We recognize that the Holy Spirit in leading the Church into all the truth, may enable it, while firmly adhering to the witness

³One view is that no division of Christendom has ever come to pass without sin. Another view is that the divisions were the inevitable outcome of different gifts of the Spirit and different understandings of the truth. Between these, there is the view of those who look back on the divisions of the past with penitence and sorrow coupled with a lively sense of God's mercy, which in spite of and even through these divisions has advanced His cause in the world.

of these Creeds (our common heritage from the ancient Church), to express the truths of revelation in additional forms according to the needs of future ages.

Finally, inasmuch as in dealing with this subject of creeds we have been occupied in considering the place and importance of a common Confession of the Faith, we desire at the same time to leave on record our solemn and unanimous testimony that no external and written standards can take the place of that inward and personal experience of union with the living Christ, which is the only experience of spiritual vitality, and that *the object of our faith is not any statement about Christ, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.*

REPORT OF SECTION V

Received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 20, 1927

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

We, members of the Conference on Faith and Order, are happy to report that we find ourselves in substantial accord in the following five propositions:

1. The ministry is a gift of God through Christ to His Church and is essential to the being and well-being of the Church.
2. The ministry is perpetually authorized and made effective through Christ and His Spirit.
3. The purpose of the ministry is to impart to men the saving and sanctifying benefits of Christ through pastoral service, the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments, to be made effective by faith.
4. The ministry is intrusted with the government and discipline of the Church, in whole or in part.
5. Men gifted for the work of the ministry, called by the Spirit and accepted by the Church, are commissioned through an act of ordination by prayer and the laying on of hands to exercise the function of this ministry.

Within the many Christian communions into which in the course of history Christendom has been divided, various forms of ministry have grown up according to the circumstances of the several communions and their beliefs as to the mind of Christ and the guidance of the New Testament. These communions have been, in God's providence, manifestly and abundantly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints. But the differences which have arisen in regard to the authority and functions of

these various forms of ministry have been and are the occasion of manifold doubts, questions and misunderstandings.

These differences concern the nature of the ministry (whether consisting of one or several orders), the nature of ordination and of the grace conferred thereby, the function and authority of Bishops, and the nature of Apostolic Succession. We believe that the first step toward the overcoming of these difficulties is the frank recognition that they exist, and the clear definition of their nature. We therefore add as an appendix to our Report such a statement, commending it to the thoughtful consideration of the Churches we represent.

By these differences the difficulties of intercommunion have been accentuated to the distress and wounding of faithful souls, while in the mission field, where the Church is fulfilling its primary object to preach the Gospel to every creature, the young Churches find the lack of unity a very serious obstacle to the furtherance of the Gospel. Consequently the provision of a ministry acknowledged in every part of the Church as possessing the sanction of the whole Church is an urgent need.

There has not been time in this Conference to consider all the points of difference between us in the matter of the ministry with that care and patience which could alone lead to complete agreement. The same observation applies equally to proposals for the constitution of the United Church. Certain suggestions as to possible church organization have been made, which we transmit to the Churches with the earnest hope that common study of these questions will be continued by the members of the various Churches represented in this Conference.

In view of (1) the place which the Episcopate, the Councils of Presbyters, and the Congregation of the faithful, respectively, had in the constitution of the early Church, and (2) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems of government are each to-day, and have been for centuries, accepted by great communions in Christendom, and (3) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems are each believed by many to be essential to the good order of the Church, we therefore recognize that these several elements must all, under conditions which require further study, have an appropriate place in the order of life of a reunited Church, and that each separate communion, recalling the abundant blessing of God vouchsafed to its ministry in the past, should gladly bring to the common life of the united Church its own spiritual treasures.

If the foregoing suggestion be accepted and acted upon, it is essential that the acceptance of any special form of ordination

as the regular and orderly method of introduction into the ministry of the Church for the future should not be interpreted to imply the acceptance of any one particular theory of the origin, character or function of any office in the Church, or to involve the acceptance of any adverse judgment on the validity of ordination in those branches of the Church universal that believe themselves to have retained valid and apostolic Orders under other forms of ordination; or as disowning or discrediting a past or present ministry of the Word and Sacrament which has been used and blessed by the Spirit of God.

It is further recognized that inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon every believer, and each believer has an immediate access to God through Jesus Christ, and since special gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as teaching, preaching and spiritual counsel, are the treasures of the Church as well as of the individual, it is necessary and proper that the Church should make fuller use of such gifts for the development of its corporate spiritual life and for the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

In particular, we share in the conviction, repeatedly expressed in this Conference, that pending the solution of the questions of faith and order in which agreements have not yet been reached, it is possible for us, not simply as individuals but as Churches, to unite in the activities of brotherly service which Christ has committed to His disciples. We therefore commend to our Churches the consideration of the steps which may be immediately practicable to bring our existing unity in service to more effective expression.

In conclusion, we express our thankfulness to Almighty God for the great progress which has been made in recent years in the mutual approach of the Churches to one another, and our conviction that we must go forward with faith and courage, confident that with the blessing of God we shall be able to solve the problems that lie before us.

NOTES

1. The following is the view of the Orthodox Church, as formulated for us by its representatives:

"The Orthodox Church, regarding the ministry as instituted in the Church by Christ Himself, and as the body which by a special charisma is the organ through which the Church spreads its means of grace such as the sacraments, and believing that the ministry in its threefold form of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons can only be based on the

unbroken apostolic succession, regrets that it is unable to come in regard to the ministry into some measure of agreement with many of the Churches represented at this Conference; but prays God that He, through His Holy Spirit, will guide to union even in regard to this difficult point of disagreement."

2. In Western Christendom also there are conspicuous differences.

One representative view includes the following points: (a) that there have always been various grades of the ministry, each with its own function; (b) that ordination is a sacramental act of divine institution, and therefore indispensable, conveying the special charisma for the particular ministry; (c) that Bishops who have received their office by succession from the Apostles are the necessary ministers of ordination; (d) that the apostolic succession so understood is necessary for the authority of the ministry, the visible unity of the Church, and the validity of the Sacraments.

On the other hand, it is held by many Churches represented in the Conference (a) that essentially there is only one ministry, that of the Word and Sacraments; (b) that the existing ministries in these Churches are agreeable to the New Testament, are proved by their fruits and have due authority in the Church, and the sacraments ministered by them are valid; (c) that no particular form of ministry is necessary to be received as a matter of faith; (d) that the grace which fits men for the ministry is immediately given by God, and is recognized, not conferred, in ordination.

Further we record that there are views concerning the ministry which are intermediate between the types just mentioned. For instance, some who adhere to an episcopal system of church government do not consider that the Apostolic Succession as described above is a vital element of episcopacy, or they reject it altogether. Others do not regard as essential the historic Episcopate. Those who adhere to presbyteral systems of church government believe that the apostolic ministry is transmissible and has been transmitted through Presbyters orderly associated for the purpose. Those who adhere to the congregational system of government define their ministry as having been and being transmitted according to the precedent and example of the New Testament.

REPORT OF SECTION VI

Received by the full Conference, *nem. con.*,
August 20, 1927

THE SACRAMENTS

We are convinced that for the purpose in view in this Conference we should not go into detail in considering Sacraments—by some called “Mysteries.” The purpose therefore of this statement is to show that there may be a common approach to and appreciation of Sacraments on the part of those who may otherwise differ in conception and interpretation.

We testify to the fact that the Christian world gives evidence of an increasing sense of the significance and value of Sacraments, and would express our belief that this movement should be fostered and guided as a means of deepening the life and experience of the Churches. In this connection we recognize that the Sacraments have special reference to the corporate life and fellowship of the Church and that the grace is conveyed by the Holy Spirit, taking of the things of Christ and applying them to the soul through Faith.

We agree that Sacraments are of divine appointment and that the Church ought thankfully to observe them as divine gifts.

We hold that in the Sacraments there is an outward sign and an inward grace, and that the Sacraments are means of grace through which God works invisibly in us. We recognize also that in the gifts of His grace God is not limited by His own Sacraments.

The Orthodox Church and others hold that there are seven Sacraments and that for their valid administration there must be a proper form, a proper matter and a proper ministry. Others can regard only Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as Sacraments. Others again, while attaching high value to the sacramental principle, do not make use of the outward signs of Sacraments, but hold that all spiritual benefits are given through immediate contact with God through His Spirit. In this Conference we lay stress on the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, because they are the Sacraments which are generally acknowledged by the members of this Conference.

We believe that in Baptism administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, we are baptized by one Spirit into one body. By this statement it is not meant to ignore the differences in conception, interpretation and mode which exist among us.

We believe that in the Holy Communion our Lord is present, that we have fellowship with God our Father in Jesus Christ His Son our Living Lord, who is our one Bread, given for the life of the world, sustaining the life of all His people, and that we are in fellowship with all others who are united to Him. We agree that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the Church's most sacred act of worship in which the Lord's atoning death is commemorated and proclaimed, and that it is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and an act of solemn self-oblation.

There are among us divergent views, especially as to (1) the mode and manner of the presence of our Lord; (2) the conception of the commemoration and the sacrifice; (3) the relation of the elements to the grace conveyed; and (4) the relation between the minister of this Sacrament and the validity and efficacy of the rite. We are aware that the reality of the divine presence and gift in this Sacrament cannot be adequately apprehended by human thought or expressed in human language.

We close this statement with the prayer that the differences which prevent full communion at the present time may be removed.

REPORT OF SECTION VII

THE UNITY OF CHRISTENDOM IN RELATION TO EXISTING CHURCHES

This report was received by the full Conference on August 20, 1927, for transmission to the Continuation Committee, which then appointed a committee with the duty of considering the whole situation with regard to Subject VII and reporting to the Business Committee.

Those directions are being carried out.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Drafted by the Chairman of the Conference
at its request

We have finished our immediate task. From first to last we are able to express it in constructive terms written and received, whether they be statements of agreement or statements of difference, in brotherly love and mutual consideration. They are the product of the minds of men who earnestly desired and strove to place and keep themselves under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. Human imperfections which mingle with them we pray God to pardon. In offering to Him our handiwork, we are

but returning to Him that which He has given to us. We pray His acceptance of and blessing upon our offering.

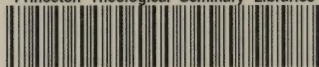
However, we have not finished our whole task. We have but taken a step on a long journey. The Conference was only a new starting point. What we did there will crumble into dust unless the representatives at Lausanne bring home to their several Churches the duty and responsibility of studying the Reports which they themselves received for this very purpose. The Conference should be repeated in every main ecclesiastical assembly, as well as in each separate congregation, throughout our entire Christian constituency if we are to take full advantage of the progress registered. By our presence and activity at Lausanne we are solemnly pledged to reproduce, each in his own local circle, the spirit and method which made the World Conference on Faith and Order what it was. "I pray you to give me the utter joy of knowing you are living in harmony, with the same feelings of love, with one heart and soul, never acting for private ends or from vanity, but humbly considering each other the better man, and each with an eye to the interests of others as well as to his own. Treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Christ Jesus."¹

We who have been privileged to labor together have done so in the joyousness of unhampered freedom. We must not forget, in the liberty which is to us a commonplace, the sufferings which some of our Christian brethren are at this very moment undergoing. Deprived of liberty, in hostile surroundings, their cry goes up to God from the house of their martyrdom. Our prayers enfold them and our sympathy stretches out affectionate arms toward them.

Finally, we commend the Christian Churches, whether represented in the Conference or not, to our Heavenly Father's guidance and safe-keeping, looking earnestly toward the day when the full mind of God will control all the affairs of mankind.

¹Phil. 2:2-5. Moffatt's translation.

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